Food safety: electronic identification of bovine animals and beef labelling

2011/0229(COD) - 02/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 386 votes to 228, with 17 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the amended proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 as regards electronic identification of bovine animals and deleting the provisions on voluntary beef labelling.

The matter had been referred back to the committee responsible for re-examination at the 11 September 2012 session.

Parliament adopted its position at first reading according to the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of an agreement negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council. They amend the proposal as follows:

Obligation to identify animals: according to the amended text, all animals

on a holding shall be identified by at least two means of identification listed in Annex I and approved by the competent authority, i.e. **(i) an electronic ear tag; (ii) ruminal bolus; (iii) an injectable transponder** . At least one of the means of identification shall be visible and bear a visible identification code.

This does not apply to animals that were born before 1 January 1998 and that are not intended for intra-Union trade. Those animals shall be identified by at least one means of identification.

- In order to **ensure the adaptation to technical progress**, the Commission should be empowered to adopt delegated acts concerning the addition of means of identification to the list set out in Annex - I, whilst ensuring their interoperability.
- **By derogation**, in the event that the characters forming the animal's identification code do not permit the application of an electronic identifier with the same unique identification code, the Member State concerned may allow that, under the supervision of its competent authority, the second means of identification may bear a different code so long as full traceability is ensured and the animal is not intended for intra-Union trade.
- **To ensure adequate traceability**, the Commission shall adopt delegated acts concerning the requirements for the means of identification and the transitional measures required for the introduction of a particular means of identification.
- **On the basis of the relevant ISO standards** or other international technical standards adopted by recognized international standard-setting organizations, the Commission shall lay down, by means of implementing acts, the necessary rules concerning: (i) the format and design of the means of identification; (ii) technical procedures for the electronic identification of bovine animals; and (iii) the configuration of the identification code.

Within five years of the entry into force of the amending Regulation, Member States should ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place in order to provide for the identification of animals on the basis of an electronic identifier as an **official means of identification** in accordance with this Regulation

Time period for the application of the means of identification: the means of identification shall be applied to the animal before the expiry of a maximum period, to be determined by the Member State in

which the animal was born. The maximum period shall be calculated from the date of birth of the animal and shall not exceed 20 days. By way of derogation, for reasons related to the physiological development of the animals, that period may, for the second means of identification, be extended **up to 60 days** following the birth of the animal.

Identification of animals from third countries: animals and meat entering the Union from third countries must be subject to identification requirements and traceability ensuring an **identical level of protection**. When live animals are imported into the Union from third countries, they are subject to the **same identification requirements** as animals born in the Union.

Removal, modification or replacement of means of identification: no means of identification may be removed, modified or replaced without the permission of the competent authority. Such permission may only be granted where the removal, modification or replacement **do not compromise the traceability of the animal** and where its individual identification, including the holding on which it was born, is possible.

Any replacement of an identification code shall be recorded in the computerised database, together with the unique identification code of the original means of identification of the animal.

Passports: passports should be issued only for animals intended for intra-Union trade. However, this Regulation should not preclude national provisions concerning the issuing of passports for animals not intended for intra-Union trade.

Voluntary labelling: the amended text stipulates that food information which is **added to labels voluntarily** by operators or organisations marketing beef shall be objective, verifiable by the competent authorities and comprehensible for consumers. That information shall **comply with the horizontal legislation** on labelling and in particular Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Where operators or organisations marketing beef do not respect these obligations, the competent authority shall apply appropriate penalties. Any penalties imposed by the Member State on a keeper, operator or organisation marketing beef shall be **effective, dissuasive and proportionate.**

Follow-up: the implementation of the regulation will have to be monitored. Therefore, **five years** following its entry into force, in the case of the provisions on the optional labelling of beef, and **nine years** in the case of the provisions regarding electronic identification, the Commission should present two reports to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the regulation and the technical and economic feasibility of introducing mandatory electronic identification throughout the Union. Those reports shall, if necessary, be accompanied by appropriate legislative proposals.