

Zootechnical and genealogical conditions for the breeding, trade in and entry into the Union of purebred breeding animals, hybrid breeding pigs and germinal products thereof

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The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development adopted the report by Michel DANTIN (EPP, FR) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the zootechnical and genealogical conditions for trade in and imports into the Union of breeding animals and their germinal products.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position at first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Subject matter and scope: Members underlined the key role breeding plays in conserving rare breeds and thereby in protecting biodiversity. However, efforts to achieve competitiveness should not lead to the disappearance of breeds with characteristics that are adapted to specific biophysical contexts.

Therefore, the Regulation should lay down zootechnical and genealogical rules for the **preservation and improvement of animal breeding** as well as rules governing the **conservation and improvement of native or endangered breeds**.

For reasons of legal certainty, Members proposed a definition of the concept of '**breed**'.

Recognition of breed societies and breeding operations: Members proposed to **clarify the legal framework** for Member State recognition of breed societies. Operators must be required to make an application for recognition in order to keep a breeding book and conduct a breeding programme.

The competent authority shall define in its application: (i) the preservation of genetic variation within the breed, (ii) the improvement of the breed, (iii) the planning of crosses, or (iv) the planning of a new breed.

The competent authority shall **assess the breeding programmes of a breed society or breeding operation and approve them** provided that they fulfil the necessary requirements.

Rights of breeders participating in breeding programmes: Members seek to **clarify breeders' rights** where they are members of a breed society or breeding operation. Specifically, such rights must be reserved for breeders within the geographical area of activity of the breed society. Breeders must have access to the services provided under the programme without discrimination.

Provisions on disputes between one or more breeders and a breed society already exist in national legislation.

Rights of breed societies and breeding operations: breed societies or breeding operations may **exclude:** (i) **breeders** from participating in a breeding programme if they do not comply with the rules set out in the breeding programme or with the obligations as laid down in the rules of procedure referred to in the Regulation; (ii) **after their registration, animals and their progeny as well as genetic material** that no longer meet the requirements officially laid down for being listed in the corresponding breeding book.

Breed societies may carry out **performance testing** based on the requirements of their breeding programme and, where performance testing is undertaken, may select activities appropriate for their breeding programme.

Breed societies and breeding operations in a Member State shall be jointly responsible for ensuring that a purebred breeding animal of a breed threatened with extinction can be entered in the main section of a breeding book in any Member State.

Zootechnical and genealogical rules applicable to purebred breeding animals for breeding: Members deleted provisions concerning this issue, arguing that there are far too many delegated acts, and they are far too broad in scope and relate to key aspects of the text. Furthermore, other species must be incorporated into this regulation only on the basis of codecision arrangements.

Methods for identity verification: breed societies shall require that purebred breeding animals of the **bovine, ovine and caprine species and male purebred breeding animals of the porcine species** are identified by analysis of their blood group, or by DNA analysis, such as by single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) analysis, by microsatellite analysis or by any other appropriate method providing at least the same degree of certainty.

The Commission shall take account of advances in identification methods on the basis of the work of the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) and the International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG).

In the case of **rare or endangered breeds**, the competent authority of a Member State or the breed societies may prohibit the use of a purebred breeding animal and its germinal products where such use would compromise the improvement, differentiation, preservation and genetic diversity of that breed.

Performance testing: Members noted that the conditions should be stipulated for carrying out performance testing and genetic evaluation prior to accepting breeding animals for breeding (both male and female, as may be the case for some breeds within the horse family).

Obligations of breed societies, breeding operations and **third parties** which carry out performance testing or genetic evaluations have also been laid out.

If the competent authorities find that the performance testing or genetic evaluations are not being carried out in accordance with recognised zootechnical principles, they may **suspend** the approved breeding programme.

Cross-border cooperation between breed societies and breeding operations: this cooperation should be facilitated, while ensuring free enterprise and the removal of obstacles to the free movement of breeding animals and their genetic material. Members considered that such Union partnership arrangements would help in particular to strengthen the Union identity of particular breeds by sharing resources and pooling information with a view to greater reliability and a higher profile.

Animal health and welfare: these aspects should be taken into account by actors in the zootechnical sector, in particular in their work on the genetic improvement of breeds. The report noted that issues relating to **cloning** should not be addressed in this Regulation.