

Beef: identification and registration of bovine animals, labelling of beef and beef products

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The rapporteur insisted that the compulsory labelling of all products was necessary, including industrially processed products (sterilised tinned food). The creation of two markets should be avoided whereby consumers would be faced, on the one hand, with labelled products which were more expensive because they offered an additional guarantee and, on the other, similar products at a cheaper price because their consumption was riskier. Commissioner Fischler said that the regulation in question should provide a guarantee of origin for beef and cattle, from the farm to the consumer, in order to win the latter's confidence. This was why a compulsory labelling system was needed. In this respect, as imposing such a procedure would require a certain degree of preparation, Mr Fischler considered it appropriate to implement an optional system for a transitional period. Finally, the Commission was prepared to accept Article 100a as the legal basis for the regulation in question but Mr Fischler underlined that, in this case, the current debate would amount to a first reading. As a result the Commission would be unable to act with the requisite degree of urgency in this area.