

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 05/06/2000 - Council position

The Council's common position retains all the modifications incorporated in the amended proposal. The majority of these changes were based on European Parliament amendments, in particular in the key areas of the proposal, such as the provisions regarding the origin of meat and the date of entry into force of the compulsory labelling scheme, as well as the optional scheme. The Council retained, in agreement with the Commission, the three following European Parliament amendments relating to: - the clarification of the link between the regulation in force and the other relevant Community measures, in particular in relating to beef; - the abolition of the use of the 'Origin: EC' label to describe the origin of beef derived from an animal born, raised and slaughtered in more than one Member State; - the reintroduction of a formal certification procedure for the optional labelling specifications. Two other modifications in the text are very close to the Parliament's amendments: - the possibility given to Member States to fix themselves, within the time limit accepted by the Parliament, the period in which producers are required to notify cattle movements; - the introduction of a new article so as to permit the co-existence of regional labelling and compulsory labelling in the Member States, without undermining the protected indications and denominations of origin. Lastly, on five points, the Council proposed, with the Commission's agreement, some changes that did not completely tally with those of the Parliament: - the addition of Art 37 of the EC Treaty as a legal base, as well as Art 152; - the information to be provided on labels during the first phase of compulsory labelling: it is proposed to eliminate the date of slaughter and the minimum period of fattening, but to retain the breed; - the national compulsory labelling systems should come to an end from the point of the introduction in the Community of the second phase of compulsory full origin labelling; - the second phase of full origin labelling should start on 1 January 2002 (instead of 1 September 2001, as proposed by the Parliament); - lastly, as far as minced beef is concerned, the Council retained the idea of a simplified labelling for this meat but strengthened the initial proposal by requiring the operators to indicate a traceability code, the Member State or the third country in which the animal was slaughtered and the Member State or the third country in which the minced beef was prepared, without the possibility of the 'non EC' indication. Furthermore, the operators can supplement the label with all kinds of other indications required in accordance with the compulsory labelling system.