Livestock production: organic production of agricultural products, indication on foodstuffs (Regul. 2092/91/EEC)

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The Committee adopted the report by Christine BARTHET-MAYER (ERA, F) on application of the Council Regulation (1991) on organic production of agricultural products to livestock production. The Commission text was an indication of Parliament's increased political role following the BSE crisis. The crisis showed the need for a comprehensive review of quality inspection systems especially with regard to animal products and rules on organic livestock farming, as well as new protection and guarantee policy for consumers inside and outside the EU. Organic livestock production comes under the umbrella of sustainable agriculture and ensures a balance between soil, crops and livestock with the aim of: * protecting and increasing the production capacity of agricultural land; * producing high-quality organic foodstuffs without residues that cause pollution; * increasing use of renewable energy and products in the production process; * maintaining biodiversity (in livestock, crops and the environment around farms). The committee argued that the regulation should allow Member States the possibility to apply rules that took account of distinctive aspects of national farming. It also proposed amendments or additions with regard to: - improvements in product inspection and the independence and powers of the inspection bodies; - a ban on the use of genetically modified organisms in farming and living virus vaccines; - rearing densities and standards for animal feeding stuffs; - processed products of organic farming and financial resources needed to make inspections effective. At the end of a particularly difficult vote, in view of the number of amendments (about 400), Mrs BARTHET-MAYER said she was pleased that most of the compromise amendments had been adopted. Nevertheless she was sorry that the amendment on increasing funds for the management and inspection of all crop and animal livestock production had not been adopted, especially as amendments enhancing labelling with a European logo associated with inspections carried out by independently approved bodies had been adopted. She also deplored the fact that the amendment on poultry rearing sheds had been accepted since it removed all references to minimum standards on density. This was inconsistent as limits on rearing densities had been adopted for the pig, beef and veal sectors. It was difficult to imagine that organic production could be combined with intensive farming.