

Animal diseases and public health: scrapie (amend. direct. 91/68/EEC)

1998/0324(COD) - 31/01/2000

The committee unanimously adopted the report by Reimer BÖGE (EPP/ED, D) approving, under the codecision procedure, the Commission proposal to amend the 1991 Council directive on animal health conditions so as to delete provisions relating to scrapie in sheep. This proposal is linked with the Commission's proposal for a regulation laying down rules for the prevention and control of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), or BSE-like diseases, affecting sheep and other animals. The committee welcomed the fact that the new proposal created a legal base for the control of scrapie in sheep, which was one of Parliament's key demands in its follow-up report on the BSE crisis. It approved the transfer of the existing legislation on scrapie, which is restricted to trade in live sheep and goats, to a single, comprehensive set of new rules which will cover TSEs affecting all animals throughout the EU and are designed to prevent infections being transmitted in food or animal feed. The committee felt that, given the scientific hypothesis that scrapie in sheep might have evolved into BSE in cattle and caused the BSE epidemic and in the light of experiments in which sheep that were fed BSE-contaminated feed contracted a disease indistinguishable from BSE, the new regulation was a welcome development. However, it pointed out in its report that the wording of the regulation on the prevention and control of TSEs needed to be tightened up where scrapie was concerned.