Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 17/05/2000 - Modified legislative proposal

On the 12 April 2000, the European Parliament adopted a total of 56 of the 62 amendments originally tabled for the compulsory beef labelling system proposal which shall be reinforced from 1 January 2003. A number of the amendments were accepted by the Commission in their entirety. They were improvements in the recitals and in the editing of the text. One accepted amendment removed a date which could have impeded the Commission from recognising the operational nature of national bovine databases while another reduced the time available for Member States to implement the regulation. Another amendment in this group clarified that labelling must occur at all stages of marketing of the beef concerned. A number of other amendments were also accepted by the Commission but reserved the right propose slight changes to their drafting, most of which were again editing improvements. Of these, one amendment makes a more generalised reference that this Regulation shall not affect other labelling legislation. Another amendment allows, in the definition of labelling, non pre-packed beef to be labelled with other "written and visible" information. This provision permits a certain flexibility for small retail butchers to display of the compulsory information to be given to customers. A recital was added to identify the way compulsory Member States labelling shall co-exist with regional labelling, without undermining the protected indications and denominations of origin, as laid down in Council Regulation 2081/92/EC. However, a more comprehensive solution than that proposed by the Parliament is required to achieve this in Article 17. A simplification was introduced in the keeping of the farm register for animals moving from one prairie to another in the mountains. The definition of the date of entry into force was also clarified, and now refers to the date after which animals are slaughtered. The Commission only partially accepted three amendments of Parliament. In Article 13(2) of the proposal, the Commission accepts that only the indications of the approval number and Member State of the place of slaughtering and de-boning shall be retained. However, the Commission retains the "category" of the carcass on the list of obligatory indications. In the first paragraph of Article 13(5), the Commission accepts that only the Member States indication shall be retained and that origin shall be defined by place of birth, rearing and slaughtering of the animal from which the beef was derived (i.e. place of de-boning shall be deleted). However, the date of entry into force for the compulsory indication of origin is still an element of discussion, and has not been modified. In the second paragraph Article 13(5), the Commission accepts to delete place of de-boning from the definition of origin and to delete the indication "Origin: EC" for beef derived from an animal born, raised and slaughtered in one Member State. However, the Commission retains its proposal to keep the possibility of an "EC" labelling option for describing the origin of beef derived from animals, which were born, raised and slaughtered in more than one Member State.