EAGGF, implementation of the budget. Special reports 1/1999, 2/1999, 1/2000, 8/2000, Court of Auditors

2000/2130(COS) - 12/12/2000

The committee adopted the report by Joe McCARTIN (EPP-ED, IRL) on the Court of Auditors' special reports. As regards the skimmed milk sector, the committee pointed to the flaws of the system in force until the end of 1999 and deplored the Council's failure to take the necessary steps either in 1989 or 1993 to address a number of loopholes which had led to financial irregularities. It urged the Commission to ensure that the level of aid was closely linked to the quality of skimmed milk and skimmed milk powder. The committee was concerned about the persistent structural surplus in the milk sector and wanted to see more measures to promote demand for milk products, as was the case in other sectors (olive oil, beef, etc.). It noted that, in 1998, the cheap butter scheme for non-profit organisations was only used in 3 Member States and that EUR 511m went on subsidies for surplus butter in the same year. Improvements were therefore needed in this sector. As far as the cereals sector was concerned, the committee was critical of the Council's failure to endorse proposals aimed at building on the 1992 reform. It recommended that, if market situations improved, a subsidy-reduction mechanism should be triggered, so as to avoid over-generous aid in favourable market situations. Future proposals should also focus on channelling more compensation payments to small farmers. Lastly, as regards the special report on swine fever, the committee regretted the failure to improve the management of the Animal Movement System and also shared the Court's view that more of the burden of combating epidemics should fall on the pig farmers themselves.