Honey: improving production and marketing (implem. Regulation (EC) No 1211/97). Report

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PURPOSE : to lay down general rules for the application of measures to improve the production and marketing of honey. CONTENT : in June 1997 the Council adopted Regulation 1221/97/EC with a view to improving the production and marketing of honey in the European Union. Under this Regulation, the Member States may draw up annual national programmes in close collaboration with representative organisations and beekeeping cooperatives. In November 1997, Commission Regulation 2300/97/EC laid down detailed rules implementing the Council Regulation. Under Article 6 of Regulation 1221/97/EC, the Commission must present a report to the European Parliament and the Council every three years on the application of the Regulation. This is the first such report. National programmes drawn up pursuant to Regulation 1221/97/EC to improve the production and marketing of honey were adopted for the first four marketing years. It should be mentioned that, because national programmes for the first year were adopted with some delay, Community funds had to be transferred to the following budget year as an exceptional measure to enable the programmes to be implemented. With regard to implementation, most of the Member States had problems in the first year the national programmes were introduced, reflected in the low rate of implementation for the first two years. The main sources of difficulty were: · adoption of the Commission's implementing Regulation towards the end of 1997, · the request by certain Member States for more time to complete their study of the structure of the sector, · the fact that this was a new kind of scheme, of which the Member States' administrations had no previous experience. Member States also reported particular problems with the timetable for implementation and with the administration of programmes. On the administrative side, three Member States reported general problems with introducing the scheme (Greece, France and Italy) and four experienced administrative problems relating to co-ordination with the regions (Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal). Apparently, some of these problems were due to the grouping of applications for reimbursement of expenditure around 15 October, the end of the EAGGF Guarantee Section Overall, Regulation 1221/97/EC to improve production and marketing of honey in the European Union seems to have helped the beekeeping sector. The priority measures in the Regulation, although limited from the budget point of view, have been valuable in terms of quality. After initial difficulties in introducing the scheme, the application of national programmes seems to have been satisfactory in the Member States. Lastly, the Commission will shortly be presenting an amendment to Regulation 2300/97/EC.