

Products of animal origin, human consumption: safety, controls. Hygiene package

2002/0141(COD) - 21/10/2003 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission presents an amended proposal which takes into account more than half the amendments made by the European Parliament. A large number of the proposed amendments aim to improve the proposal from a technical and editorial point of view. Most of these amendments are welcomed by the Commission (in some cases subject to editorial changes). However, certain of these amendments unnecessarily tighten the requirements of the proposal. In other cases, more appropriate wording has been proposed in the framework of the work carried out in Council. These amendments are rejected. The principal amendments accepted are: - extra flexibility as regards official controls in small meat businesses. The concept of 'artisanal small businesses,' is rejected since it conflicts with the general food safety policy of the Commission; - certain amendments deal with introducing in the text requirements for imports that were previously contained in 'Hygiene 2'. This is in principle in line with the approach of the Commission and of the Council. However, certain detailed requirements contained in some amendments are not always consistent with the approach of the Commission and of the Council, and sometimes duplicate the Commission proposal on official feed and food controls. These are rejected. The other amendments require important redrafting; - a number of amendments aim at introducing flexibility in the system of food chain information (information from the farm that has to accompany the animals to slaughter). Some are acceptable. As regards the identification of animals in particular, animals whose identity cannot be ascertained should in principle not be slaughtered for human consumption. These amendments can therefore not be accepted. - it has been decided that health marking would be limited to red meat (thus excluding poultry and rabbits) at the level of the slaughterhouse, as it was considered that systematic official carcass-by-carcass inspection was only required at this level. Therefore, certain amendments on this cannot be accepted, as they are not in line with this approach: - the Commission text provides for the possibility of the use of company staff for certain control activities. A number of amendments have been adopted that aim at bringing this company staff very much into the sphere of the competent authority. The Commission believes these two things should be kept separate. The Commission does agree to introduce some extra requirements for the establishments using company staff in control activities; - the amendment stating that the presence of the official veterinarian in small slaughterhouses should be based on an analysis of risks, is in line with the original Commission proposal and is therefore acceptable; - nearly all the amendments that deal with the training requirements for official veterinarians and official auxiliaries can be accepted as they integrate technical specifications that are more or less in line with the general food safety policy; - a number of amendments have been tabled that specifically concern live bivalve molluscs and fishery products. Most of these concern the issue of marine biotoxins in molluscs. The Commission accepts some, but most are rejected as they aim at unnecessarily weakening the provisions for marine biotoxins, or unnecessarily limits the freedom of action by the competent authority in case of risks; - the Commission accepts the amendments relating to: communication of the lists of approved establishments; emergency slaughter; the tasks of official auxiliaries; the approved veterinarian, and the presence of the competent authority in cutting plants.