Foodstuffs of animal origin: maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products

1996/0279(CNS) - 05/02/1997

According to committee chairman Mr Ken COLLINS (PSE, UK), the Commission proposal on residues of veterinary medicinal products in foods of animal origin was worthy of "Mickey Mouse". The Commission representative had irritated MEPs by advising them not to play "sorcerer's apprentice" by dividing the proposal under examination and only dealing with one part, thereby provoking a chain reaction which they would be powerless to stop. But Mr COLLINS, as rapporteur, replied that it was the Commission who was playing "sorcerer's apprentice" by squeezing two completely different matters into a single document and crying urgency on a proposal which it had only transmitted three weeks previously. The proposal in question was for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 on the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foods of animal origin. Refusing to allow itself to be "bewitched", the Committee on Consumer Protection had unanimously decided, within the framework of the consultation procedure, to accept one part of the proposal and reject the other. It therefore approved, with reservations, the section extending the deadline for setting maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products previously authorized in foods of animal origin by two years (to 1 January 1999) in order to be able to complete the enormous volume of evaluation work needed. However, it rejected the part of the proposal seeking to authorize provisional residue limits in foods from animals which had undergone clinical trials. With no such limits, it would be impossible to use these animals to manufacture food after 1 January 1997. The Committee on Consumer Protection refused to allow the Commission to slip this part of the proposal through unnoticed together with the first part without giving Parliament time to examine it in detail. If the Commission refused to withdraw the section on clinical trials, Parliament would still have the facility to refer the entire text to the parliamentary committee.