Monitoring the BSE crisis with regard to public health and food safety

2000/2321(INI) - 19/12/2001

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Karl Erik OLSSON (ELDR, S) sharply criticising certain Member States for their inadequate and late implementation of Community BSE legislation and calling on the Commission to compile a report on Member States' performance in this area. It pointed out that, despite the 1994 ban on feeding mammalian meat-and-bone to ruminants, new cases of BSE were still occurring, showing that ruminant feed had been contaminated. The committee also argued that the EU should without delay ban the feeding of animals with products derived from their own species and ensure that feed for ruminants, omnivores and intermediate species was kept separated. In view of the dismal track record, the Council was urged not to lift the ban on feeding meat-and bone meal to omnivores in the foreseeable future. Existing stocks of meat-and-bone meal and feed containing such meal should be destroyed. The committee also repeated its call for the removal of all livestock herds from the food chain where a case of BSE was confirmed, seeing this as a radical solution in the fight against epidemics and as an appropriate strategy for combating BSE. Members felt that the Commission's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) should become the EU authority responsible for monitoring Member States' food legislation as well as their implementation of and compliance with Community legislation. The FVO must be given powers to instruct the Member States' authorities to adopt immediate measures, where necessary, to protect the health and safety of consumers. The Commission must have the right to impose penalties on Member States which failed to implement EU legislation on feed and foodstuffs adequately, and on multinationals which infringed such legislation. Finally, the Commission was called on to investigate fully the possible link between calf feed and BSE, given the most recent cases in Denmark and Finland, and to take the necessary steps to ensure that animal feed was not contaminated with BSE.