Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 13/10/1999 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: establishment of a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 820/97. CONTENT: The proposal, which is one of two (see procedure 1999/0205/COD), seeks to lay down general rules for a compulsory labelling system, introduced in two separate steps. Both proposals are made on a legal basis that differs from Regulation 820/97/EC. The Commission took the Council to Court when Regulation 820 /97/EC was adopted under the former Article 43 of the Treaty. The judgment of Case C-269/97 is still pending. In these proposals, in line with Commission policy in this matter, Article 152 of the new Treaty is taken as the legal basis because since the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, it expressly mentions 'by way of derogation from Article 37, measures in the veterinary and phytosanitary field which have as their direct objective the protection of public health'. Unlike Regulation 820/97/EC (which was adopted under the former Article 43 of the Treaty), the legal base of the new proposal is Article 152, concerning the protection of public health. This first proposal lays down rules for a compulsory beef labelling system that is to be introduced and which is to be obligatory in all Member States. Operators and organisations marketing beef shall indicate on the label information about certain characteristics of the beef and the point of slaughter of the animal or animals from which that beef was derived. The compulsory beef labelling system shall be reinforced from 01.01.2003. Operators and organisations marketing beef shall, in addition, indicate on the label information concerning origin, in particular where the animal or animals from which the beef was derived were born, reared and slaughtered. The Commission will be assisted by the Standing Veterinary Committee. This proposed Regulation follows very closely the text of Regulation 820/97/EC. A correlation table is provided in the Annex of the proposal.