EAGGF, implementation of the budget. Special reports 1/1999, 2/1999, 1/2000, 8/2000, Court of Auditors

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PURPOSE : to present the special report 1/2000 from the Court of Auditors relating to classical Swine Fever. CONTENT : this report concentrates on the measures taken by the Commission following swine fever 1997/98. As a reminder, the common organisation for pigmeat traditionally provides only limited market support for the sector, but when there is an epidemic classical Swine Fever (CSF), the Community expenditure on exceptional measures to support the market and veterinary measures results in a quantum increase in the charge to the budget. A total of EUR 570 million for exceptional market support measures and EUR 80,5 million for veterinary measures has been charged to the 1997 and 1998 budget. With regard to the epzootic epidemic in 1997/98, the main objective of the Court of Auditors was to evaluate the management of the crisis in the four Member States affected (Germany, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands) and at the Commission level. In the veterinary field, the eradication and surveillance programmes have not supported the Community from CSF and the Commission has not ensured that Member States presented programmes immediately after the 1993 to 1995 epidemic. The notification system of animal movements in the Community (ANIMO) failed to identify the essential information at the right moment. The Community's non-vaccination policy, based on the nature of the vaccines and the cost of the vaccination campaign in comparison with that of eradication, was brought into question by the arrival of marker vaccines and by the very high costs stemming from the 1997/98 epidemic. The Court highlights that very often the amounts paid to the farmers had not been controlled because the evaluations were insufficiently reported. Moreover, the Court discovered problems in the following of the animals to the time of their final destruction. The Court recalls that from 1995 it had made a certain number of recommendations in view of the combat against classical swine fever from 1993 to 1995. The Court made four main recommendations: 1) to make sure that the regulatory texts specify clearly, from the beginning, the conditions in which the veterinary measures and the exceptional measures are applicable; 2) to examine the possibility of fixing the different rates for the two measures; 3) to take measures so that the compensation paid by the Member States to the producers are calculated following more specific and homogeneous conditions; 4) to provide a revised proposal for the regulation in force. The Court states that in 2000, these recommendations have not been fully taken into account. The fact that there were new problems in the veterinary field (putting in place of the free internal market and BSE) shows that a priority has not been given to emergency plans. The Member States were badly prepared for the epidemic in 1997 /98 when they were confronted with the same situation 2 years previous. Consequently, the Court invites the Commission to dedicate the necessary resources in order to achive the revision ofCommunity legislation and policy in this sector as quickly as possible in order to reduce the risk of future outbreaks of classical swine fever causing epidemics on such a scale. The Member States should also take reponsibility by efficiently implementing the Community legislation.