

Undesirable substances in animal feed

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The European Parliament endorsed the report drafted by Mrs Marit PAULSEN (ELDR, Sw), however, amendments were made to the proposal for undesirable substances and products in animal nutrition. The Parliament wishes to lay down even clearer and more precise rules than those proposed by the Commission. The European Parliament wants to establish a proactive system requiring priority to be given to food safety through coordinated measures at all stages in the feed chain. Parliament outlines that the directive must therefore also cover the primary stage, as some two thirds of all feed given to animals is produced at this stage. The use of water in feed mixtures is also highlighted. The same rules should apply to the quality of water as to that of other feed products. For this purpose water needs to be expressly mentioned in the definition of feedingstuffs. Furthermore, Parliament wants to prevent the re-export of products intended for animal nutrition which under the EU standards are deemed to contain harmful levels of undesirable products, on the grounds that this is unethical. It should be noted that rules on feedingstuffs are needed to ensure agricultural productivity and sustainability, and to make it possible to safeguard consumer health and animal welfare. In addition, there is a need for comprehensive regulation in the field of food hygiene in order to guarantee good-quality feedingstuffs on individual farms even when they are not commercially produced. Crucial amendments were also adopted on stricter limit values for mercury and cadmium, toxic substances which accumulate in food chains. The only way to reduce contamination at the end of the food chain is to exclude any products which are too highly contaminated at the start. Dioxins and PCBs are further substances which accumulate in organisms and are toxic even at very low doses. Hence, in the wake of recent food crises, Parliament felt it unthinkable to adopt a directive which did not lay down limit values for these two groups. Furthermore, levels are to be set within a maximum of six months.