

Prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs)

1998/0323(COD) - 07/07/2006 - Implementing legislative act

ACT : Commission Regulation 1041/2006/EC amending Annex III to Regulation 999/2001/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards monitoring of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies in ovine animals.

CONTENT : Regulation 999/2001/EC lays down rules for the monitoring of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) in ovine animals.

On 8 March 2006, a panel of experts on TSEs in small ruminants, chaired by the Community Reference Laboratory for TSEs (CRL), confirmed that bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in those animals cannot be excluded following the results of the second stage of discriminatory testing of brain samples of two sheep from France and one sheep from Cyprus. Further testing is required in order to exclude the presence of BSE in such animals.

In April 2002, the former Scientific Steering Committee of the European Commission (SSC) adopted an opinion on safe sourcing of small ruminant materials should BSE become likely in small ruminants. In its opinion of November 2003, the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) endorsed the recommendations of the SSC opinion with regard to the TSE-related safety of certain small ruminant products.

The significance of those TSE cases in France and Cyprus, where the presence of BSE cannot be excluded should be assessed. In order to do so, the results of an increased monitoring of TSEs in sheep is essential. Therefore, and in line with the SSC and EFSA opinions, the monitoring of sheep should be extended in order to improve the Community eradication programmes. Those programmes also increase the level of consumer protection, in addition to the safe sourcing of sheep products assured by the current measures, in particular the provisions on the removal of specified risk materials, in Regulation 999/2001/EC.

The extended monitoring should be based on a statistically valid survey in order to determine the likely prevalence of BSE in sheep as soon as possible and to improve knowledge of the geographical distribution of the disease.

In view of the high level of TSEs in the ovine and caprine population in Cyprus the extended monitoring of ovine animals can be limited to non-infected flocks.

The monitoring programme in ovine animals should be reviewed after at least six months of effective monitoring.

Regulation 999/2001/EC should therefore be amended accordingly. This is the aim of this Regulation.

Lastly, in order to ensure the highest possible level of consumer protection by assessing the possible prevalence of BSE in ovine animals, the amendments made by this Regulation should enter into force without delay.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 09/07/2006.

