Basic information

1999/0204(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation	Procedure completed
Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef Repealing Regulation (EC) No 820/97 1996/0228(CNS) Repealing Regulation (EC) No 820/97 1996/0229(CNS) Amended by 2011/0229(COD) Amended by 2013/0136(COD) **Subject** 3.10.05.01 Meat 4.60.02 Consumer information, advertising, labelling 4.60.04.04 Food safety	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	PAPAYANNAKIS Mihail (GUE/NGL)	24/11/1999

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	PAPAYANNAKIS Mihail (GUE/NGL)	24/11/1999

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	KINDERMANN Heinz (PSE)	19/10/1999

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Agriculture and Fisheries	2218	1999-11-15
Agriculture and Fisheries	2284	2000-07-17
Agriculture and Fisheries	2256	2000-04-17
Social Affairs	2269	2000-06-06

European

Commission DG	Commissioner

Commission	Agriculture and Rural Development	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
13/10/1999	Legislative proposal published	COM(1999)0487	Summary
15/11/1999	Debate in Council		
15/11/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
21/03/2000	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
21/03/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A5-0088/2000	
11/04/2000	Debate in Parliament		
12/04/2000	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T5-0148/2000	Summary
17/05/2000	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(2000)0301	Summary
05/06/2000	Council position published	08251/1/2000	Summary
15/06/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
03/07/2000	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		
03/07/2000	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A5-0193/2000	
05/07/2000	Debate in Parliament		
06/07/2000	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T5-0318/2000	Summary
17/07/2000	Act approved by Council, 2nd reading		
17/07/2000	Final act signed		
17/07/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
11/08/2000	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1999/0204(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Amendments and repeals	Repealing Regulation (EC) No 820/97 1996/0228(CNS) Repealing Regulation (EC) No 820/97 1996/0229(CNS) Amended by 2011/0229(COD) Amended by 2013/0136(COD)
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 152 Rules of Procedure EP 050
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Committee dossier	ENVI/5/12817

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A5-0088/2000 OJ C 040 07.02.2001, p. 0005	21/03/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T5-0148/2000 OJ C 040 07.02.2001, p. 0062-0130	12/04/2000	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A5-0193/2000 OJ C 121 24.04.2001, p. 0021	03/07/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T5-0318/2000 OJ C 121 24.04.2001, p. 0163-0370	06/07/2000	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Council position	08251/1/2000 OJ C 240 23.08.2000, p. 0007	05/06/2000	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(1999)0487	13/10/1999	Summary
Modified legislative proposal	COM(2000)0301 OJ C 311 31.10.2000, p. 0217 E	17/05/2000	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position	SEC(2000)0956	08/06/2000	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2004)0316	27/04/2004	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2005)0009	25/01/2005	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2019)0076	11/02/2019	
Follow-up document	COM(2019)0625	13/12/2019	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2023)0498	30/08/2023	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0240/2000 OJ C 117 26.04.2000, p. 0047	02/03/2000	
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0525/1999 OJ C 226 08.08.2000, p. 0009	12/04/2000	
EU	Implementing legislative act	32003R1082 OJ L 156 25.06.2003, p. 0009-0012	23/06/2003	
EU	Implementing legislative act	32004R0911 OJ L 163 30.04.2004, p. 0065-0070	29/04/2004	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	RCC0006/2004 OJ C 029 04.02.2005, p. 0001-0036	08/07/2004	Summary
EU	Implementing legislative act	32005R0644 OJ L 107 28.04.2005, p. 0018-0019	27/04/2005	Summary

Additional information		
Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Regulation 2000/1760 OJ L 204 11.08.2000, p. 0001	Summary

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 17/07/2000 - Final act

PURPOSE : to establish a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products. COMMUNITY MEASURE : Regulation 1760/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation 820/97/EC. . CONTENT : The Council unanimously approved all the Parliament's second reading amendments to the draft Regulation establishing a system for the identification of bovine animals and the labelling of beef products. The Regulation will apply to beef from animals slaughtered on or after 1 September 2000. It introduces a transparent system of compulsory labelling in two stages. In the first stage, which applies as soon as the Regulation is implemented, the consumer will be provided with: - a reference number ensuring the link between the meat and the animals or animal; - the approval numbers of the slaughterhouse and cutting hall; - the Member State(s) or third country in which slaughter or cutting up took place. As from 1 January 2002, the beginning of the second stage, the label will have to mention the Member State or third country of the animal's birth and all the Member States or third countries in which it was fattened. The European Parliament's second reading sought to: - delete the compulsory indication of the category of animal or animals; - strengthen the provisions on minced beef, so as to ensure that the label indicates the country of origin when this is not country in which the meat is prepared. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 14/08/2000.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 17/04/2000

The Council reached a political agreement on a proposal establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation 820/97/EC. A common position will be adopted at a future meeting and sent to the European Parliament for a second reading under the co-decision procedure.

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.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 12/04/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mr. Mihail PAPAYANNAKIS (GUE/NGL, Greek), the European Parliament approves the proposal for a European Parliament and Council Regulation establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation 820/97/EC. This proposal was subject to amendments which are as follow: - the compulsory beef labelling system shall be introduced and made obligatory in all Member Sates from 01/09/2000 onwards; - Council Regulation 2772/1999/EC of the 21 December 1999 providing for the general rules for a compulsory beef labelling system specifies that such general rules are to be applicable only on a provisional basis, for a maximum period of 8 months, i.e. from 01/01/2000 to 31/08/2000; - should eartags become accidently detached, they should be replaced within a reasonable time; - research is currently focusing on the identification of bovine animals using an 'immunological eartag'. These developments should be welcomed and the work being carried out supported; - the distribution of eartags shall be recorded in the passport; - a compulsory beef labelling system shall be introduced which is obligatory in all Member States from the date of entry into force of this Regulation. The places of birth, rearing and slaughter of the animal or animals from which the beef was derived shall be clearly indicated on the label; - in the case of products that are not packaged, the appropriate information in written and visible form shall be provided for the consumer at the point of sale; - as from 01/09/2001, operators and organisations shall also indicate on the labels the Member State, or third country, of birth, where fattening took place and where slaughter took place; - for animals born before the entry into force of the compulsory registration on 01/01/1998, whose place of birth cannot be clearly identified according to this Regulation, the following additional indication must appear on the label: "Birth not registered (before 1.1.98)"; - beef which does not comply with this Regulation shall be labelled "This beef does not comply with EU traceability regualtions"; - the approval of a specification shall imply a guarantee on the part of the competent authority, obtained on the basis of a detailed study of the information laid down in paragraph 1, the correct and reliable functioning of the planned labelling system and, in particular, its control system; - any specification providing for labels which contain misleading or insufficiently clear information shall also be rejected; - where beef is produced and/or sold in two or more Member States, the competent authorities of the Member States concenred shall consider and approve the specifications submitted to them insofar as the information they contain relates to operations which take place on their respective territories. In such cases, each Member State shall be required to recognise the approvals granted by any of theother Member States concerned; - within a period of one year from the date of the entry into force of this Regulation, the European Parliament and the Council shall decide, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 152 of the Treaty, to extend the scope of this Regulation to include processed products containing beef and beef-based products; - every six months from the entry into force of this Regulation, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament indicating the Member States' compliance status.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 08/06/2000 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission's proposal aimed to lay down general rules for a compulsory system, in two separate phases which: introduce immediately a compulsory beef labelling system, obligatory in all Member States; and in the second phase, reinforce the compulsory beef labelling system. The Commission's view on the Council's Common Position on these five points is the following: - following the introduction of the Amsterdam Treaty, the Commission considers that Article 152 of the Treaty is the appropriate legal base for the Regulation, since it deals with measures in the veterinary field, which have as their direct objective the protection of public health. However, the Commission, acknowledging the judgement of the European Court of Justice on 4 April 2000, with regard to the legal base for Council Regulation 820/97/EC (Case C-269/97), and recognising Council's unanimous wishes to add Article 37, could accept a double legal base, provided that this did not undermine any of the Parliament's prerogatives, acquired under Article 152; - the compulsory indication of category of the animal from which the beef was derived was an element of the Commission's original proposal and constitutes an important indicator of quality of beef. In its amendments at first reading, the Parliament gave preference to limiting the labelling system only to the indications ensuring traceabiity. However, in view of the Common Position of the Council, and the benefits to the consumer of receiving such information on beef, the Commission supports the compromise offered by Council; - the Commission has always defended the view that the proposed beef labelling system should end when the full Community system begins. In view of the compromise solution offered by the Council, which retains certain elements of current national labelling systems demanded by the consumer, the Commission can agree to the Council's Common Position on this point; - the Commission has defended a cautious approach to the speed of introduction of the second phase of full origin labelling in

the Community. However, taking account of the Parliament's wishes, a special effort has been made by starting the second phase on 01.01.2002, which is only four months after the Parliament's proposed date. This compromise solution is, therefore, acceptable to the Commission; - on the issue of the labelling of minced beef, the Council has shown in its Common Position a willingness to move towards the Parliament's position, which required much more strict labelling requirements for minced beef than originally proposed by the Commission. In the Commission's opinion, the Council's Common Position on this point provides a creditworthy solution that strikes a balance between consumer's right to guarantees over traceability and the necessity for a feasible system. In conclusion, taking into account the above-mentioned considerations, the Commission supports the Common Position adopted by the Council.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 27/04/2004 - Follow-up document

In this report to the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission evaluates the application of the legislation on beef and veal labelling by the Member States, examines the feasibility of extending beef origin labelling to processed beef products and beef prepared by operators in the restaurant and institutional catering sector, and formulates proposals that will serve as a basis for discussion. The report concludes that the Community beef labelling legislation has provided the guarantees demanded by the consumer as regards beef origin traceability and labelling. It has greatly helped to restore consumer confidence and to return beef consumption to previous levels in the European Union and should therefore be maintained. However, according to the European meat trade sector it has led to a degree of re-nationalisation of trade in beef, particularly in the case of beef products sold directly to final consumers (i.e. the retail sector). For that reason the possibility of indicating EU origin instead of national origin without weakening consumer guarantees could be studied. That possibility would be restricted to establishments preparing beef cuts intended directly for final consumers. In that situation it would be up to those operators to decide whether to indicate a national or a Community origin depending on the requirements of consumers and the distribution sector. There have also been technical difficulties in application, relating to constraints on the homogeneity of beef cut batches in secondary cutting plants, the constitution and labelling of beef trimming batches, providing consumer information for non-pre-wrapped products and the voluntary beef labelling scheme. Therefore, without affecting consumer guarantees, the Commission proposes the adoption, under the management committee procedure, of a number of measures designed to improve and facilitate application of this Regulation. These are: - allowing beef from more than one primary cutting plant to be combined within the same secondary cutting batch; - adopting simplified measures for labelling trimmings and for labelling beef products sold unwrapped; - facilitating mutual recognition of approvals granted by competent national or regional authorities for the specifications provided for under the voluntary beef labelling scheme. On the other hand, the Commission is not in favour of extending the beef origin labelling provisions to processed beef products, products composed of beef and other ingredients or cooked beef prepared by institutional caterers, restaurants and fast-food outlets. It feels that this would be particularly difficult for the operators to apply for both technical and commercial reasons. While Regulation 1760/2000/EC has helped to restore consumer confidence and re-establish beef consumption, extending its scope would merely bring extra constraints and expense without any extra safeguards for public health or any impact on beef consumption: the cost /benefit ratio of such a measure would be disadvantageous. Where minced-meat production is concerned, the Commission feels that introducing the possibility of combining beef from more thanone slaughter country in the same batch of minced meat would result in origin traceability problems. With this report, the Commission would like to engage the Council and the European Parliament in a discussion of its assessment of the situation and the need, if any, to amend the rules in force. Once the matter has been examined by the Council and Parliament, and in the light of contributions to the debate by the various stakeholders, the Commission will make appropriate proposals.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 29/04/2004 - Implementing legislative act

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Commission Regulation 911/2004/EC implementing Regulation 1760/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards eartags, passports and holding registers. CONTENT : This Regulation lays down detailed rules for eartags, holding registers and passports in the framework of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals. It provides that Ear tags should include information on the Member State of origin together with information on the individual animal. The codified form of such information must be the two-letter country code together with a maximum of 12 digits. Bar codes are authorised in addition to the country code and the maximum 12 digits. Certain Member States are permitted to use ear tags containing an alpha-numeric code until the end of a transitional period. Italy is permitted to use a maximum of three supplementary characters provided those supplementary characters do not form part of the numeric code. The Regulation authorises keepers to acquire in advance, if they so wish and in compliance with the national provisions, a quantity of ear tags proportionate to their needs for a period of no more than one year. In addition, the Regulation: - provides for the information contained in the replacement ear tags in the event of ear tag losses; - defines certain minimum uniform rules for the design and layout of the ear tags; - provides that the information contained in the passport and the register should be in a form which allows animals to be traced. The information should be consistent with that to be included in the computerised database provided for in Council Directive 64/432/EEC. The period between three and seven days to be determined by Member States for keepers to notify movements, births and deaths of animals must be linked to the date of the event. However, Member States may determine the relevant period from the date when the animal is ear tagged. The Regulation makes optional the mention of certain pieces of information on passports accompanying bovine animals born before 1 January 1998 and for bovine animals born before 1 January 2004 in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia or Slovakia. That derogation does not put in question the obligation to mention these pieces of information on passports of bovine animals born in the territory of a Member State where such a requirement is provided by its national rules. Finally, in view of the control measures relating to Community aid schemes, certain information relating to the premiums must be included in the passport, as provided in Council Regulation 1254/1999/EC. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 1st May 2004.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 06/07/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

The European Parliament in its second reading following the recommendation of Mihail PAPAYANNAKIS (EUL/NGL, Greece) amended the common position as follows: -information additional to the information concerning where the animal was born, fattened or slaughtered may be provided under the voluntary beef labelling system. -the derogation applicable to minced beef must indicate not only the country of preparation, but also the country of origin, where the state or states involved are not the state of preparation.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 25/01/2005 - Follow-up document

PURPOSE: to present a report to the Council and Parliament concerning the possibility of introduction of electronic identification for bovine animals.

CONTENT: Bovine animals are identified according to Regulation 1760/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation 820/97/EC. This system includes the elements "double ear-tag", "holding register", "cattle-passport" and "computerised database".

According to the aforementioned Regulation, the Commission was required to examine, on the basis of work performed by the Joint Research Centre, the feasibility of using electronic means for the identification of animals. The European Parliament and the Council, acting on the basis of a report from the Commission, are invited to consider the possibility of introducing electronic identification arrangements in the light of progress achieved in this field.

In 1998 the Commission launched a large-scale research project on livestock electronic identification (IDEA). The final report was presented in April 2002 and necessary clarifications were made in July 2002. This project has demonstrated that in principle, the use of electronic identifiers can deliver a substantial improvement in animal identification systems provided a number of conditions concerning the accompanying measures are fulfilled. The conclusions of this project allow recommendations to be made on technical issues and conclusions concerning the conditions of introducing electronic identification arrangements for bovine animals in the EU.

The purpose of this report is to summarise the experience gained on the basis of the IDEA project on the use of electronic identification in bovine animals and to draw conclusions concerning the conditions of introducing electronic identification arrangements for bovine animals in the European Union. It focuses mainly on the results of the IDEA-project but also considers experiences with the existing system.

The main conclusion of the report is that electronic identification can contribute to improvements in existing systems of cattle identification. For example, electronic identifiers allow a faster reading and a higher reading accuracy than classical ear-tags. Dynamic reading and direct entry of data into databases is also possible (removing potential errors caused by inaccurate manual database entry). This could in particular ease the procedure to report the movements of animals to the database. However the contribution of electronic identification to improve animal identification and traceability should not be overestimated in view of the nature of difficulties in applying existing systems. Complete tagging of all animals and an efficient data management are preconditions for any system of identification, irrespective of whether electronic identifiers or classic ear-tags are used.

The introduction of electronic identification should be considered in the light of its technical feasibility and its capability to improve the existing system of bovine identification. It has been demonstrated that the technology has been developed to the extent that it can be applied. Electronic identification can improve the existing system of identification and registration in certain ways. It can, for example, contribute to a higher accuracy in holding registers, allow instantaneous inputs into central databases and ensure records are continually maintained and updated provided that the current system of identification and registration based on classical ear-tags is well established. Otherwise the benefits of electronic identification would not be achieved.

To decide on the possibility of introducing electronic identification systems on a Community wide basis, the following general conditions for the identification and registration of bovine animals would have to be considered:

- Organisational structures and data management systems have to be well established;

- Animals would have to be identified at any time by (at least) two identifiers, where one must be a ‘visual' ear-tag and the second can be an electronic identifier;

- According to present knowledge the requirement of tagging within a period not longer than 20 days after birth limits the use of the bolus in view of the maturation of the fore-stomachs of the calf;

- Each type of identifier has to be kept out of the food chain, which would limit the use of the injectable transponder due to its reduced recovery rate;

- The additional costs for electronic identification need to be considered in relation to its increased accuracy.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 05/06/2000 - Council position

The Council's common position retains all the modiciations incorporated in the amended proposal. The majority of these changes were based on European Parliament amendments, in particular in the key areas of the proposal, such as the provisions regarding the origin of meat and the date of entry into force of the compulsory labelling scheme, as well as the optional scheme. The Council retained, in agreement with the Commission, the three following European Parliament amendments relating to: - the clarification of the link between the regulation in force and the other relevant Community measures, in particular in relating to beef; - the abolition of the use of the 'Origin: EC' label to describe the origin of beef derived from an animal born, raised and slaughtered in more than one Member State; - the reintroduction of a formal certification procedure for the optional labelling specifications. Two other modifications in the text are very close to the Parliament's amendments: - the possibility given to Member States to fix themselves, within the time limit accepted by the Parliament, the period in which producers are required to notify cattle movements; - the introduction of

a new article so as to permit the co-existence of regional labelling and compulsory labelling in the Member States, without undermining the protected indications and denominations of origin. Lastly, on five points, the Council proposed, with the Commission's agreement, some changes that did not completely tally with those of the Parliament: - the addition of Art 37 of the EC Treaty as a legal base, as well as Art 152; - the information to be provided on labels during the first phase of compulsory labelling: it is proposed to eliminate the date of slaughter and the minimum period of fattening, but to retain the breed; - the national compulsory labelling systems should come to an end from the point of the introduction in the Community of the second phase of compulsory full origin labelling; - the second phase of full origin labelling should start on 1 January 2002 (instead of 1 September 2001, as proposed by the Parliament); - lastly, as far as minced beef is concerned, the Council retained the idea of a simplified labelling for this meat but strengthened the initial proposal by requiring the operators to indicate a traceability code, the Member State or the third country in which the animal was slaughtered and the Member State or the third country in which the minced beef was prepared, without the possibility of the 'non EC' indication. Furthermore, the operators can supplement the label with all kinds of other indications required in accordance with the compulsory labelling system.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 08/07/2004 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: Special Report of the Court of Auditors on the organisation of the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals in the EU.

CONTENT: The main objective of the audit was to evaluate the cattle identification and registration system, at the Commission (design, implementation controls and follow-up) and in the Member States (operational system allowing effective monitoring of animals from birth until slaughter and allowing verification of correct payment of all direct aid). The audit was carried out in the four Member States with the largest bovine herds (Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom).

The identification system has four components: ear tags, passports, herd registers and the computerized database containing the details of all cattle. This database is one component of the system and was to be operational on 31 December 1999 at the latest.

Cattle identification and registration systems were set up in the four Member States more than two years after the target date of 31 December 1999 and still have some weaknesses. For example, the passports of animals traded between Member States are not monitored, there is no exchange of information between national databases, there are delays in updating the databases and the level of reliability of the information contained in the databases must often be considered inadequate. The main finding is that the cattle identification and registration system that was designed does not guarantee the traceability of intra-Community or extra-Community cattle movements. These movements nevertheless involve approximately three million head of cattle per year (approximately 4 % of the herd).

The Parliament and the Council laid down the general framework of the system. The Commission was given the task of implementing certain components of the system, but responsibility for implementing the system lies with the Member States. The legislation did not include procedures for Member States to exchange data on cattle movements and the exchange was in any case compromised by the fact that data format varies from one Member State to another. All attempts to reconcile information from the various databases have failed. The Member States interpreted certain elements of Community regulations in different ways, in respect of the deadlines for tagging and reporting, the fundamental concept of 'keeper of bovine animals' and return of animal passports. The Commission was not given responsibility for adopting implementing measures for setting up and checking the databases. This explains, in part, the differences found between the Member States.

The control and penalty systems in place have not been adapted to ensure that they are appropriate to the various keepers of cattle, such as traders, assembly centres or slaughterhouses. In addition, the databases contain certain data, such as retagging rates and delays in registration, which the Member States do not use as control instruments. Control practices also vary greatly between Member States.

As far as checks on the implementation and monitoring of the cattle identification and registration system are concerned, the Commission has interpreted its own role in a restrictive manner and has given no guidance on the setting-up of the databases. No standardised management rules have been issued and no quality indicator has been developed as regards the operation of the databases. The procedures for recognising the 'fully operational character' of the databases are unsatisfactory and the Commission's role is too often limited to confirming the technical existence of the databases, without evaluating their actual operation on the basis of precise management rules or predefined quality indicators.

The Commission should be given adequate resources to take on a genuine guiding role in the system, in particular by drawing up standardised management rules, quality indicators and a format for the exchange of data between national databases. The exchange of data between Member States, and even with third countries, should be organised with a view to retaining control over intra-Community and extra-Community movements.

The administrative checks applied in the various Member States should also be compared and specifications provided for cross-checks to be carried out between the identification and registration databases and the IACS databases before the various premiums are paid. The system of on-the-spot checks should also be reviewed, including the penalty mechanisms, and specific approaches for the different types of keepers of cattle should be drawn up and an approach imposed which is fully integrated with IACS.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 27/04/2005 - Implementing legislative act

ACT : Commission Regulation 644/2005/EC authorising a special identification system for bovine animals kept for cultural and historical purposes on approved premises as provided for in Regulation 1760/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT : this Regulation aims to establish a special identification system for animals recognised by the competent authority as being kept for cultural and historical purposes on premises approved for that purpose by that authority.

The special identification system should, in accordance with Regulation 1760/2000/EC, provide for derogations only from the application and removal of the approved ear tags. This regulation is without prejudice to the application of the other provisions of Regulation 1760/2000/EC.

By way of derogation from Regulation 1760/2000/EC, it is appropriate to provide that the approved ear tags may be removed without the permission of the competent authority, but under its control, after animals are moved to the premises and that such ear tags not need to be applied to animals born on such premises. In both cases the animals must be marked by specific means of identification. The approved ear tags should be applied to animals when they are moved from the premises or should accompany the animals if they are moved directly to other premises.

The measures provided for in this Regulation are in accordance with the opinion of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund Committee.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 01/05/2005.

Beef: identification and registration of animals and labelling of beef

1999/0204(COD) - 17/05/2000 - Modified legislative proposal

On the 12 April 2000, the European Parliament adopted a total of 56 of the 62 amendments originally tabled for the compulsory beef labelling system proposal which shall be reinforced from 1 January 2003. A number of the amendments were accepted by the Commission in their entirety. They were improvements in the recitals and in the editing of the text. One accepted amendment removed a date which could have impeded the Commission from recognising the operational nature of national bovine databases while another reduced the time available for Member States to implement the regulation. Another amendment in this group clarified that labelling must occur at all stages of marketing of the beef concerned. A number of other amendments were also accepted by the Commission but reserved the right propose slight changes to their drafting, most of which were again editing improvements. Of these, one amendment makes a more generalised reference that this Regulation shall not affect other labelling legislation. Another amendment allows, in the definition of labelling, non pre-packed beef to be labelled with other "written and visible" information. This provision permits a certain flexibility for small retail butchers to display of the compulsory information to be given to customers. A recital was added to identify the way compulsory Member States labelling shall co-exist with regional labelling, without undermining the protected indications and denominations of origin, as laid down in Council Regulation 2081/92/EC. However, a more comprehensive solution than that proposed by the Parliament is required to achieve this in Article 17. A simplification was introduced in the keeping of the farm register for animals moving from one prairie to another in the mountains. The definition of the date of entry into force was also clarified, and now refers to the date after which animals are slaughtered. The Commission only partially accepted three amendments of Parliament. In Article 13(2) of the proposal, the Commission accepts that only the indications of the approval number and Member State of the place of slaughtering and de-boning shall be retained. However, the Commission retains the "category" of the carcass on the list of obligatory indications. In the first paragraph of Article 13(5), the Commission accepts that only the Member States indication shall be retained and that origin shall be defined by place of birth, rearing and slaughtering of the animal from which the beef was derived (i.e. place of de-boning shall be deleted). However, the date of entry into force for the compulsory indication of origin is still an element of discussion, and has not been modified. In the second paragraph Article 13(5), the Commission accepts to delete place of de-boning from the definition of origin and to delete the indication "Origin: EC" for beef derived from an animal born, raised and slaughtered in one Member State. However, the Commission retains its proposal to keep the possibility of an "EC" labelling option for describing the origin of beef derived from animals, which were born, raised and slaughtered in more than one Member State.

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1999/0204(COD) - 13/12/2019 - Follow-up document

Pursuant to Article 23a of Regulation (EC) 1760/2000, the Commission presented a report dealing with the implementation and impact of the provisions on voluntary beef labelling, including the possibility of their review.

Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 was adopted in the aftermath of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE) crisis, in order to improve transparency and strengthen the confidence of consumers in beef.

Regulation (EU) 653/2014 amended Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 and significantly simplified the provisions on voluntary beef labelling, with the main aim of reducing the administrative burden for operators and competent authorities, as well as to reduce costs borne by operators to provide such voluntary information. The amended rules do not foresee the requirement for authorisation of voluntary beef labelling any more. Such voluntary information must comply with the horizontal legislation on labelling and in particular Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on food information to consumers.

Analysis of previous evaluations and reports

Following two evaluations carried out in 2004 and 2009, a third detailed evaluation “Evaluation of EU beef labelling rules” was carried out for the Commission in 2014, a few months after the adoption of Regulation (EU) No 653/2014.

In relation to the voluntary labelling system, the main outcomes were:

- the volume of beef subject to voluntary schemes represented an average of 23% of all beef sold in the national markets of the six case study Member States (DE, FR, IT, ES, UK, IE);

- stakeholders had diverging views on the consequences of the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 653/2014 simplifying voluntary labelling rules: some appreciated the simplified procedure; others saw the risk of deteriorating the whole system and loss of consumer confidence;

- consumers were generally able to understand indications provided in accordance with voluntary rules. However, some consumers interviewed complained that labels provided in accordance with the voluntary rules often resulted in crowded labels. This led to the paradox whereby labels on beef simultaneously provide too much information without sufficient explanation, rendering them difficult to understand;

- in general, voluntary indications did not feature as factors that have a major influence on consumers' self-described purchasing behaviour;

- most stakeholders highlighted that Regulation (EU) No 653/2014 brought voluntary labelling rules for beef in line with general food labelling rules;

- in some cases, voluntary labels were used only in business to business sales;

- some retailers feared that the 2014 simplification of voluntary labelling would lead to a proliferation of labels with low levels of guarantee that the information provided on the voluntary label is objective, verifiable and comprehensive for consumers, which could damage the image of the sector. Others considered it a positive development: the simplification of procedures allows for economic operators to develop new voluntary claims, responding to consumers' demand.

Results of the consultation

The report highlighted the following issues:

- in addition to voluntary beef labelling now following horizontal rules in all Member States, some national specifics were maintained in four Member States. Portugal and Slovenia kept a full national system of notification and control, Italy simplified the national system and, in France, many operators continued using the specifications approved before 2014 with controls from an independent body;

- overall, the effects of simplification were evaluated positively by Member States and stakeholders. Competent authorities and operators did not find difficulties to introduce the new rules at administrative and operational levels;

- the new rules were considered positively by most respondents, allowing to achieve simplification, harmonisation with other sectors, reduction of the administrative burden and improved capacity of operators to respond to consumers' demand, without causing problems at intra-EU trade level or undermining the effectiveness and reliability of the system;

- a risk of more frequent non-conformities was mentioned by some respondents but without supporting evidence confirming it. The analysis of available data on nonconformity rates before and after the introduction of the new rules showed comparable levels of non-conformity.

Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis carried out during previous evaluations and of replies to the questionnaires received from Member States and stakeholders, the Commission considers that the simplification of voluntary beef labelling under Regulation (EU) No 653/2014 is functioning satisfactorily and there is no need to review current provisions on voluntary beef labelling.