

EUROPEAN UNION

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

RESOLUTION

of the Committee of the Regions

of 5 April 2001

on

Tackling Foot and Mouth Disease

- **HAVING REGARD TO** the European Commission's work programme for 2001 (COM 2001/28 final) and to the Committee of the Regions' political priorities;
- **HAVING REGARD TO** the wave of public concern in the Member States in the wake of the "Mad Cow" crisis (BSE) and the recent outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and in the light of the decisions taken on these issues in particular the Council decision of 4 December 2000, to ban the use of meatmeal in animal feed;
- **WHEREAS** a debate is getting under way, within the EU institutions, on new guidelines for the Common Agricultural Policy and the need for an approach which takes full account of the regional dimension - a debate which follows on the support expressed at the Biarritz Summit (September 2000) for a "diversified, high quality and safe European food model",
- **WHEREAS** the Stockholm European Council invites the Council and the European Parliament to ensure that the decision on the establishment of a European Food Authority is taken before the end of 2001,

The Committee of the Regions

notes that BSE and foot-and-mouth disease are two quite different problems, but that they clearly demonstrate the need for reform of the CAP to take account of consumer protection, food safety, environmental considerations and animal welfare. In this connection the EU should take immediate steps to promote the production of plant proteins for animal feed. The CoR has decided to set up a working group which will shortly present its conclusions on animal feed, product traceability, food safety requirements, and accessible consumer information;

observes that BSE poses fundamental problems affecting food safety and the very concept of the European agricultural model, which the CoR has already addressed;

considers that Foot and Mouth disease is not, however, a food safety issue, but relates to the health and economic management of a well-known epizootic disease;

calls on all regions, Member States and the EU to put systems in place in light of the current Foot and Mouth crisis, to ensure that quick and decisive actions are taken to prevent recurrence;

calls on the European Commission and the European Council of Ministers to endorse the following points in their policy against Foot and Mouth disease:

- to review the general issue of vaccination, and in particular authorise protective emergency vaccination in a given region with an outbreak of FMD, on request of a Member State;

recommends a thorough analysis of the causes of the rapid spread of the disease (moving animals around, illegal transport, negligence on the part of some operators, inadequate checks on the health of the flock, size of herd, training of stockmen, etc.), in order to establish the measures needed to contain further outbreaks;

calls on the Commission and the sector "in the interest of animal welfare and in order to limit the spreading of disease" to review the system of live animal transports, with a view to reducing both the number of transports and shortening the distances travelled; EU subsidies should not encourage transport of live animals;

wishes all Regions and Member States to cooperate in bringing to justice all those involved in the smuggling and illegal transportation of animals and meat products;

asks for greater resources to be earmarked for research to speed up the development of a new vaccine which will make it possible in future to distinguish between vaccinated animals and those which are carrying the disease;

is pleased to note that the SVC has decided to authorise emergency vaccination of high value animals and rare breeds, e.g. for bulls used for artificial insemination purposes or exotic animals in zoos;

hopes that appropriate measures will be taken speedily to assess the economic consequences of epizootic diseases for stockbreeders, the entire sector and rural activities, in particular tourism, and to draw up compensation arrangements tailored to the diversity of regional and local situations;

calls on the Commission to urge the EU's trading partners to take a regional approach to trading and

import restrictions, to the effect that regions not affected by foot and mouth disease can continue exporting, with active consideration for areas within countries;

instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European Parliament and Commission.

Brussels, 5 April 2001.

The President

of the

Committee of the Regions

The Secretary-General

of the

Committee of the Regions

Jos Chabert

Vincenzo Falcone

--

CdR 137/2001 fin FR-EN/KH/OU/hm

CdR 137/2001 fin FR-EN/KH/OU/hm