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INFORMATION MEMO

Harmonization of veterinary legislation

The Council of Ministers of EEC has just issued a directive on health requirements for intra-Community trade in cattle and pigs. The object of this is to harmonize the health precautions enforced by the Member States so as to permit free trade in cattle and pigs without the risk of spreading contagious diseases.

The directive lays on the exporting country the responsibility of ensuring compliance with the health regulations for cattle and pigs, for breeding or for slaughter, intended for intra-Community trade. A health certificate issued by the appropriate veterinary authority, and giving details of place of origin, despatching centre and means of transport must accompany the animals to their destination.

Any Member State putting a ban on the entry of cattle or pigs must communicate the reasons for the ban both to the consignor and to the appropriate authorities in the exporting country. An exporter wishing to dispute the ban may call in a veterinary expert chosen from a list to be drawn up by the Commission: the expert must be from a country not directly involved.

Annexes to the directive lay down detailed conditions for cattle and pigs and herds free of tuberculosis and brucellosis, for rules on the preparation and use of tuberculin and serums, for institutes preparing and testing them, and for methods of diagnosing tuberculosis, brucellosis and mastitis.

Specimen health certificates have been given for each class of animal.

As far as the present Community situation permits, the directive is based on the rules and standards established by the International Office of Epizootics, OECD, FAO and WHO, and on studies and experiments undertaken by countries interested in these matters. Relations between the Member States and non-member countries have also been taken into account.
