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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 86/75 for a decision on common and coordinated research programmes in the fields of animal leucoses, livestock effluents, beef production and plant protein production

Rapporteur: Mr J.M. GIBBONS

PE 40.729/fin.

By letter of 30 April 1975 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision on common and coordinated research programmes in the fields of animal leucoses, livestock effluents, beef production and plant protein production.

On 12 May 1975 the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible, and the Committee on Public Health and the Environment and the Committee on Budgets as the committees asked for their opinions.

The Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr Gibbons rapporteur on 22 May 1975.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 3/4 June 1975.

At the same meeting the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement.

The following were present : Mr Vetrone, Acting Chairman; Mr Laban, Vice-Chairman; Mr Gibbons, rapporteur; Mr Della Briotta, Mr Früh, Mr Hansen, Mr De Koning, Mr Ney, Mr Brøndlund Nielsen and Lord St. Oswald.

The opinion of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment is attached.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets will be published separately.

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The Committee on Agriculture hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement :

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

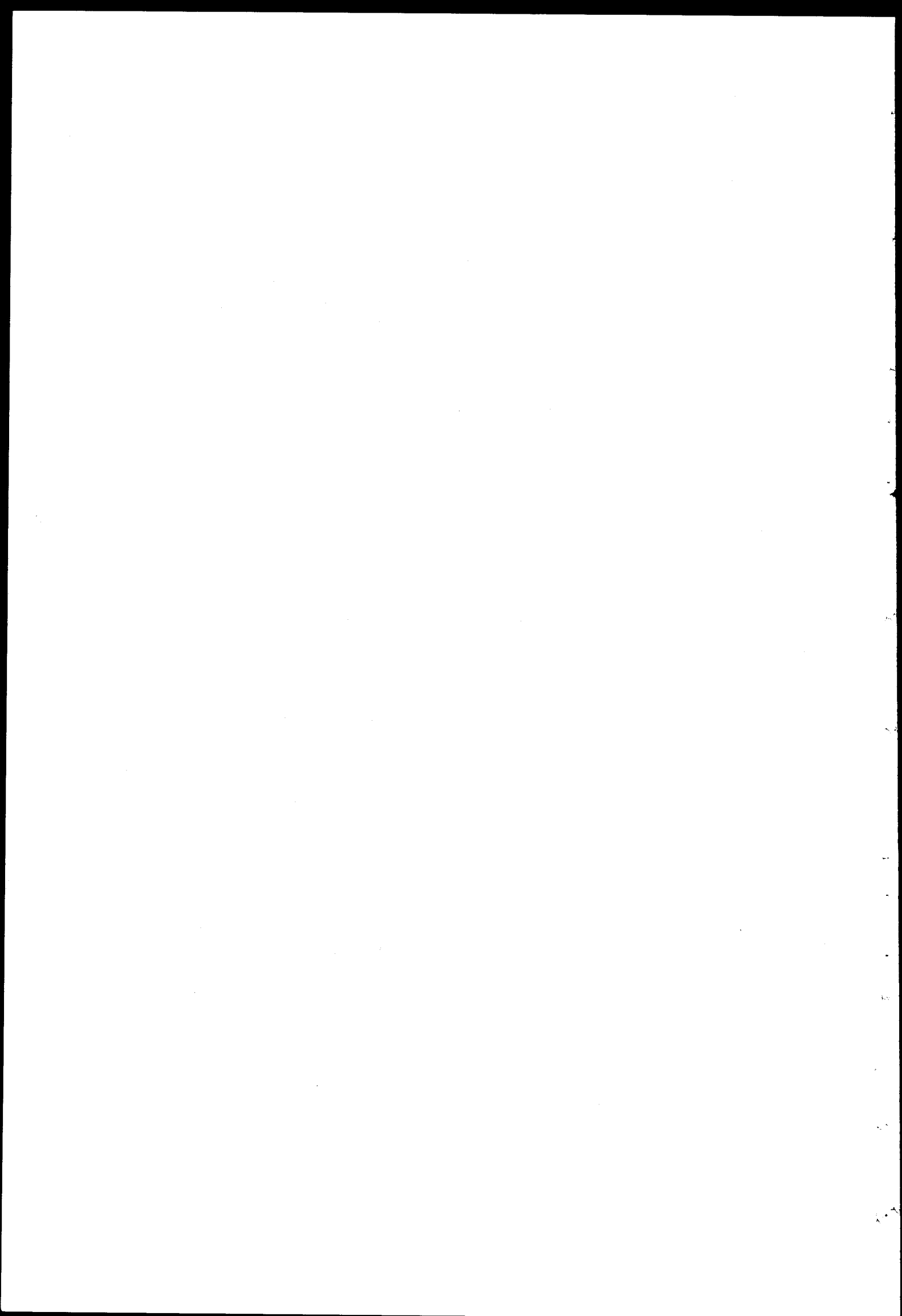
embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision on common and coordinated research programmes in the fields of animal leucoses, livestock effluents, beef production and plant protein production

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council,¹
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 86/75),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and the opinions of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment and the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 134/75),
1. Welcomes the Commission's proposal as being a contribution to the improvement of agricultural productivity and the elimination of obstacles to intracommunity trade;
 2. Requests the Commission to include, within the framework of existing research programmes on beef production and livestock effluents, the improvement of winter housing for cattle, thereby contributing to more orderly marketing;
 3. Believes that such research programmes should be extended to other fields, and in particular, pesticide residues in edible horticultural produce and in the poultry sector;
 4. Requests that the Commission inform the Committee on Agriculture regularly, in the framework of the reports foreseen in Article 11 of Regulation (EEC) No 1728/74², of new areas of research under consideration by the Commission, so as to allow the European Parliament the possibility of putting forward in time areas of research it considers suitable for inclusion in subsequent Commission proposals.

¹ OJ No. C 114, 23.5.1975, p. 4

² OJ No. L 182, 8.7.1974, p. 1



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The purpose of the Commission's proposal

1. The purpose of the Commission's proposal is to provide for coordination at Community level of national research programmes, in accordance with Regulation (EEC) No. 1728/74⁽¹⁾ in the following four areas:

- animal leucoses
- livestock effluents
- beef production
- plant protein production.

Coordinated and common research programmes in agriculture

2. Regulation (EEC) No. 1728/74 provided for coordination of national agricultural research programmes, or, where such efforts would be insufficient, for supplementary joint Community projects.

3. A Standing Committee on Agricultural Research was established in order to advise the Commission on the manner in which information collected be made available to interested parties and ensure the necessary harmony between the activity of the committee and that of the Scientific and Technical Research Committee.

4. The Council, after consulting the European Parliament, is to decide on programmes to be adopted and the financial contribution of the Community.

Areas selected for research

5. Four areas have been selected for coordination of research programmes:

(a) animal leucoses

differential diagnosis of Marek's disease and avian leucoses;

development of more effective vaccination and control of Marek's disease;

improvement of the diagnosis of bovine leucosis and identification of the infectious agent.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No. L 182, 8.7.1974, p.1

(b) livestock effluents

establishment of comparable methods of livestock effluent analysis and solutions to particular problems (combatting odours and germs and alternative means of disposal);

(c) beef production

improvement of the efficiency of beef production, to increase meat output and quality, through : better reproduction control; reduction of calf mortality; early breeding; study of body development; study of suitability of major European breeds for cross-breeding with Friesians; and improved slaughter and marketing methods.

(d) qualitative and quantitative improvement of plant proteins

improvement of means of analysis of proteins; improvement of crops with a high protein content, and especially fodder grasses and legumes, seed legumes and cereals, and in particular maize.

The proposals in these fields can be warmly welcomed as a contribution to the aims laid down for the Common Agricultural Policy.

The Committee on Agriculture would like to suggest, however, that the improvement of winter housing for cattle be included within the framework of the programmes established concerning beef production and livestock effluents.

Seasonal fluctuation in the supply of cattle on to the market, due to increased costs in winter, is a major problem for market management. Slaughter premiums have been introduced to encourage more orderly marketing¹. Research on winter housing, to arrive at improved design of space and to deal with problems caused by animal effluents, would make an important contribution to increasing the possibilities for farmers to retain cattle in the winter months, and so achieve a more regular flow to the market.

Method of selection of areas for research

6. The list of research topics given above was drawn up by the Commission after consulting, firstly with an ad hoc group of Directors-General of Agricultural Research in Member States, and then, upon its establishment, the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research.

¹ Regulation No 1967/74, 23.7.1974, O.J. No L 206, p. 1.

7. Regulation (EEC) No. 1728/74, in its fifth consideration, makes reference to concentration of efforts on applied research and their early application by farmers, in order to link such research as closely as possible to the Common Agricultural Policy.

8. In addition, Article 11 establishes that the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and the Council a report on information on national organization of research, the overall picture of developments in the Community, a progress report on measures adopted, and forward study of desirable research developments.

In the debate in the session of March 1973 on the Commission's proposal of 22 December 1972 concerning the coordination of agricultural research, Commissioner Lardinois stated that he agreed, in principle, that such reports should be made on an annual basis ⁽¹⁾.

9. It is clearly desirable that, since research efforts are to be concentrated on practical applied research, the European Parliament should be able to add its voice in the preliminary discussions on the directions in which agricultural research is to be supported. The Committee on Agriculture, therefore, requests that the Commission keep it informed of discussions on areas in which the Commission is considering participating and that the Committee on Agriculture be given consequently the possibility of suggesting areas suitable for Community collaboration.

Future possible areas of research to be supported in the framework of Regulation (EEC) No 1728/74 are :

- the mechanisms of agricultural marketing, with special reference to the question of vertical integration and producer incomes;
- study of soils and their potential utilisation.

The Committee on Agriculture would warmly welcome proposals on these areas.

10. The Committee on Agriculture furthermore would like to point out that its recent deliberations have drawn attention to the need for research on pesticide residues in edible horticultural produce and in feedingstuffs, particularly those relating to the egg and poultry sector.

(1) O.J. Annex No.160, Debates 13-16 March 1973; p.141.

11. Moreover, the Committee on Agriculture insists on the necessity for regular reports, as laid down by Article 11 of Regulation (EEC) No 1728/74.

Financial Implications

12. Community financing of coordinated national programmes is to be limited to incidental financing (travelling and publication costs).

Estimates for common programmes are calculated on a basis of a 50% Community participation.

1,000,000 u.a. has been entered in Chapter 98 of the 1975 Budget, of which 645,500 u.a. will be used for the proposed programmes.

For the years 1976 to 1979, the costs are estimated as follows :

1975	645,500 u.a.
1976	3,354,000 u.a.
1977	3,655,500 u.a.
1978	4,000,500 u.a.
1979	4,336,000 u.a.

TOTAL 15,991,500 u.a.

Conclusions

13. The Committee on Agriculture welcomes the present proposals as making a contribution to the improvement of agricultural productivity and a step towards the elimination of obstacles to intraCommunity trade.

14. The Committee on Agriculture requests the Commission to include, within the framework of existing research programmes on beef production and livestock effluents, the improvement of winter housing for cattle, thereby contributing to more orderly marketing.

15. The Committee on Agriculture also requests that the Commission inform it regularly, in the framework of the reports foreseen in Article 11 of Regulation (EEC) No 1728/74, of discussions on new areas of research considered and, consequently, allow the Committee on Agriculture to suggest suitable areas of research before Commission proposals are formalized.

16. The Committee on Agriculture furthermore suggests that the problems raised by pesticide residues in edible horticultural produce and in feedingstuffs, particularly those in the egg and poultry sector, be examined.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Draftsman: Mr L. DELLA BRIOTTA

On 26 May 1975 the Committee on Public Health and the Environment appointed Mr Della Briotta draftsman.

It considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 27 May and adopted it unanimously.

Present: Mr Jakobsen, vice-chairman, acting chairman and deputizing for the draftsman; Lord Bethell, Mr Didier, Mr Hansen, Mr Martens, Mr Ney, Mr Noè, Mr Scelba (deputizing for Mr Rosati), Mr Spicer, Mr Springorum and Lord St. Oswald (deputizing for Mr Creed).

A. INTRODUCTION

1. In its efforts to achieve the objectives of the common agricultural policy, the Commission proposes, pursuant to Article 5 of Regulation (EEC) No. 1728/74¹ concerning the coordination of agricultural research, that action should be taken in the following four areas:

- animal leucoses;
- livestock effluents;
- beef production;
- plant protein production.

2. The research programmes already being undertaken in the Member States in the first two fields will be coordinated, which will improve the effectiveness of individual projects.

In addition to this coordination, common programmes will be drawn up for these and the other two fields and will be undertaken and financed jointly by the Commission and the Member States.

B. REMARKS

3. The coordination of activities in the field of livestock effluents is required to prevent duplication between the programmes referred to in this proposal and the European Economic Community's environmental research programme (indirect action) adopted by Council decision of 18 June 1973².

4. The programmes of research into animal leucoses, beef production and plant protein production are primarily of importance for the achievement of the objectives of the common agricultural policy and particularly as regards improving productivity, the profitability of cattle-breeding and supplies of protein used as feedstuffs.

¹ OJ No. L 182, 5/7/1974, p. 1

² OJ No. L 189, 11/7/1973, p. 43

5. The programme concerning livestock effluents is of principal interest to the Committee on Public Health and the Environment. The discharge of such effluents does indeed cause considerable pollution problems, particularly where the holdings concerned are near centres of population; we need think only of the pollution of surface water and the nuisance caused by smell. These effluents could very well be used as manure. We find, however, that many farmers use artificial fertilizers, which also constitute a danger to the environment.

6. It should be noted that, in certain areas of the Community, animal effluents occur in greater quantities than can be used as manure in the immediate vicinity.

Among the reasons for this situation are the increase in the number of animals, the enlargement of animal husbandry undertakings and their concentration in certain regions, and the reduction in the amount of land under cultivation. Furthermore, this tendency seems likely to continue.

7. Many methods are already being used to dispose of effluents, which usually occur on the farm in mixed form. The most important of these are:

1. The growing of crops that tolerate large quantities of manure (e.g. maize, 50 to 150 m³ per hectare per year, as compared with other cereals, 30 m³ per hectare per year);
2. The installation of new cattle-breeding units on arable farming land;
3. Mixing with straw (principally for pig farms);
4. The transport of effluents over some distance to arable farms;
5. Decomposition (e.g. biological, with the aid of an active slime unit);
6. Drying mixed manure.

All these methods have the advantage that they reduce the quantity of surplus effluents, but they also give rise to a conflict between ecological and micro-economic objectives.

8. The most popular method is therefore for the farmer to use as manure as much of the effluents as possible on his own land or that of third parties. However, on many farms excessive use has already had adverse effects on crop quality and yield.

C. CONCLUSION

9. The research programme proposed by the Commission takes account of all the abovementioned problems as also a number of others.

Your committee fully approves the proposed programme and hopes that the results of these research activities will soon make it possible for animal husbandry undertakings, with their large quantities of effluents, to exist harmoniously within the natural environment, any conflict between economic and ecological objectives thus being eliminated.