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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. 103/77) for a directive laying down additional provisions relating to the surveys to be carried out by Member States on cattle production

Rapporteur: Mr L. MARTENS

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PE 48.960/fin.

By letter of 20 May 1977 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Articles 43 and 209 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a directive laying down additional provisions relating to the surveys to be carried out by Member States on cattle production.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion.

The Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr Martens rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 23 and 24 May 1977.

The committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution.

Present: Mr Laban, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mr Ligios, vice-chairman; Mr Martens, rapporteur; Mr Corrie, Mr F. Hansen, Mr O. Hansen, Mr Hoffman, Mr Kofoed, Mr De Koning, Mr Mitchell, Mr Ney, Mr Pucci, Mr Radoux (deputizing for Mrs Dunwoody), Mr Schwabe and Mr Scott-Hopkins.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached.

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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 directive laying down additional provisions relating to the surveys to be carried out by Member States on cattle production

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹;
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Articles 43 and 209 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 103/77);
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 133/77);
1. Approves the Commission's proposal;
 2. Urges Member States to ensure that the results of the interim surveys on cattle production are forwarded promptly to the Commission so that the Community may pursue an efficient management policy on the basis of precise and up-to-the-minute data;
 3. Draws attention to the need to continue to encourage harmonization of basic statistics in the Member States.

¹ OJ No. C 110, 6.5.1977, p.9

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

An annual survey on cattle production has been carried out in the Community since December 1973. On the basis of the Council Directive of 15 May 1973¹, the Member States are obliged to carry out an annual survey each December, using random sampling to provide more reliable information on trends in cattle production and to enable short-term estimates to be made of the production and potential availability of slaughter cattle.

This Directive was itself a major step forward since it required all the Member States to carry out surveys on cattle numbers and provide standard data for standard categories. Thanks to the common experience of the Member States, considerable progress was made in the field of harmonizing survey methods. Nonetheless, the annual surveys did not provide the Commission with sufficient information for it to match its management policy more accurately to recent trends and actual cattle numbers. Naturally, occasional fluctuations can occur in cattle numbers and slaughter programmes can affect the situation at any given moment. At such times an annual survey makes it difficult for account to be taken of the subsequent variations.

The proposal aims, therefore, at providing the Commission with more data by means of a joint intermediate survey in May/June which would enable it to pursue a more efficient management policy. This would make existing mechanisms more precise and should lead to more accurate forecasts of the number of cattle available. Revision of the estimates regarding the supply of cattle would then be made easier and mistakes could be ascertained and corrected at an earlier date.

Up-to-date information on production trends by means of an intermediate survey is of course important in the context of the Commission's preparation of the annual farm price proposals and trade arrangements with third countries. Therefore it is essential for the Member States to make every effort to forward promptly to the Commission the results of the survey and other relevant information on their slaughter.

¹ OJ No. L 153, 9.6.1973, p. 25

It should further be noted that in respect of Italy, the proposal provides for an extension of the period referred to in Article 4(3) of Directive No. 73/132/EEC concerning the maximum permitted percentage sampling error, because that country is not yet fully capable of reducing any sampling error to the figure laid down in the Directive. However, the Committee on Agriculture hopes that the implementation of this proposal for joint intermediate surveys may help Italy to improve its statistical instruments.

Your committee would finally like to raise once again the problem of the comparability of statistics at Community level. Although the statistics are to remain largely an internal matter for the individual countries, and each Member State must continue to use its own methods for collecting and collating data, the basis for the surveys must be identical in each of the Member States if we wish to obtain results which are meaningful at Community level. The Committee on Agriculture therefore emphasizes that more progress must be made in the complex field of harmonizing basic statistics.

Intermediate surveys on cattle numbers as referred to in this proposal for a directive, are already being carried out in 7 of the Member States. France has recently decided to arrange for a survey of this nature to be carried out for the first time on 1 June this year. The implementation of this directive in the Community should, therefore, cause no particular problems.

The Committee on Agriculture has previously emphasized the importance of surveys for market stability and more efficient management¹ and therefore approves the Commission's proposal.

¹ Martens report, Doc. 124/76

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman of the committee to Mr HOUDET, chairman of the
Committee on Agriculture

Brussels, 20 May 1977

Dear Mr Chairman,

At its meeting of 16 May 1977, the Committee on Budgets considered a proposal for a Council directive laying down additional provisions relating to the surveys to be carried out by Member States on cattle production (Doc. COM(77) 132 final - Doc. 103/77).

The Committee on Budgets found:

- (a) that it would be impossible to have the survey carried out by the Commission;
- (b) that the data gathered will make possible short-term forecasting of the beef and veal market and provide essential statistics for the effective implementation of the common agricultural policy;
- (c) that there were valid precedents for this statistical programme.

After considering the financial schedule and obtaining additional information, the Committee on Budgets delivered a favourable opinion on the proposal, which would cost 1,200,000 u.a., chargeable to Article 264 of the Budget for 1978.

Yours sincerely,

Erwin LANGE

Present: Mr Lange, chairman; Mr Aigner, first vice-chairman; Mr Cointat, third vice-chairman; Mr Dalyell, Mr Maigaard, Mr Mascagni, Mr Schreiber, Mr Würtz and Mr Yeats.