

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL  
ON THE EXISTING SITUATION IN RESPECT OF VETERINARY,  
ANIMAL SCIENCE AND ANIMAL PROTECTION MATTERS

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Draft

Commission Communication to the Council  
on the existing situation in respect of  
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- I. The Community Veterinary, Animal Science and Animal Protection working programme was drawn up in 1968 and revised in 1974 and 1978. Two delegations have recently submitted memoranda on the subject and a review of progress is to take place shortly within the Council.

The Commission feels that the basic principles set out in the programme as drawn up are still valid: veterinary legislation has an essential part to play in the protection of human health and defence of consumers; it must also protect animal health, which is a necessary condition for profitable stock farming; further, the measures taken must help remove obstacles to free circulation; finally, in the animal protection field, efforts must be continued to avoid any unnecessary suffering.

If these objectives are to be complied with it will be necessary, apart from the measures taken in respect of trade, to bring about the progressive establishment of common standards of hygiene and common measures against animal diseases; as the state of health of animals improves in the Community and reaches a uniformly high level, free circulation can improve and the outlets on non-member countries' markets can not only be maintained, which is necessary, but can be further opened up to trade. In this context, it is clear that unjustified obstacles will have to be eliminated, whether they are based in national law or in the effect of non-member countries' legislation.

- II. The set of rules adopted up to now is not complete, certainly, but it does already cover some very important sectors: measures applicable in trade between the Member States for the principal products, with extension to cover the internal market as far as possible; common arrangements for imports from non-member countries, which is an essential part of any coherent Community Policy; progressive development of harmonized measures to combat animal diseases with financial participation by the Community in some particularly important cases.

The work carried out since the Commission's last memorandum represents definite progress, largely as a result of an increase in the numbers of Commission staff: the end of the exceptions in brucellosis and tuberculosis; progress towards the end of exceptions in respect of swine fever and towards increasing Community financial participation; progress in implementing the non-member countries Directives.

III. The Commission's major preoccupation at present is to ensure uniform implementation of the existing texts by means of action on the following points:

1. Adoption of implementing measures which the Community institutions have still to adopt (for example, for the Directive on the common system for imports from non-member countries).
2. Action to bring about more uniform implementation by the Member States: this may, in some cases, imply defining common implementing rules (for example in respect of meat, particularly poultry-meat) this should also lead to extension of the principle of inspection visits to Community slaughterhouses. This could lead to a solution of some problems caused by inadequate hygiene standards (salmonella). This should, finally, bring about harmonization in the manner in which veterinary inspections are financed in the Community.
3. Revision of existing texts in the light of experience: for example, the Directive on trade in meat and, at the same time, the Directive on imports of meat from non-member countries, with a view to relaxing the standards somewhat.
4. Some additions to be made to existing texts:
  - (a) in cases where the existing texts are proving inadequate to deal with certain urgent problems: the problem of the use of oestrogen products and the problem of checking residues in meat now have to be dealt with; the protection of animals in intensive units has been given priority,

- (b) in cases where there are still significant obstacles to trade: this is particularly true for foot and mouth disease, as the existing obstacles can clearly only be overcome if a common campaign is set up which might imply Community financial participation, as in respect of swine fever.

The Commission will continue to implement the working programme drawn up by the Council, on these lines. The Commission feels that this will enable the progressive development of a more coherent set of veterinary rules, thereby indicating real European achievement in the important fields of the protection of human and animal health.

- IV. The ability to carry out this programme is largely a function of the personnel employed on it. The existing numbers are inadequate, and, in this respect, the Commission would remind the Council of its memorandum of 6 March 1978.

