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PRESS RELEASE

Commission Proposes Directive on
Health requirements for animals and meat imported
from non-member countries

The EEC Commission has submitted to the Council of Ministers a draft directive concerning health requirements and control on the import of cattle, pigs and of fresh meat from non-member countries. This directive is a counterpart to those of 26 June 1964⁽¹⁾ on intra-Community trade in this sector.

It will be recalled that the directives of June 1964 establish uniform rules to remedy present disparities between veterinary laws and enable intra-Community trade in cattle, pigs and fresh meat to be carried on without danger to animal or human health.

As regards trade in animals and meat with non-member countries the directives of June 1964 merely stipulate that, pending the establishment of a Community system for these products, domestic arrangements in the Member States concerning them should not be less strict than those governing intra-Community trade. This has proved too loose, for free movement within the Community of animals and meat of whatever origin is unattainable as long as the veterinary rules applied by the Member States at their common frontiers are not unified and control procedures are not identical. Moreover, this clause cannot provide against every health situation in the world, in particular the existence in certain non-member countries of "exotic" diseases. It is therefore essential that the Member States adopt uniform measures.

The draft directive now submitted to the Council lays down, in respect of a number of "exotic" diseases mentioned by name, that imports shall be banned entirely for the time necessary to avoid any danger of infection. However, exceptions are possible as regards both the time-limits to be observed and the geographical scope of the ban if the health guarantees furnished are considered satisfactory.

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(1) Official gazette No. 121, 29 July 1964, pp. 1977/64 and 2012/64.

In view of the importance of these exemptions for the Member States, the latter will be closely associated with the Commission's decisions in this field by a procedure similar to that of the Management Committees under the common market system for agricultural products. It is proposed to set up a "Veterinary Committee", in which the Commission and the representatives of the Member States will deal with all cases expressly covered by the directive.

Subject to the possibility of making certain exceptions or of allowing for special situations, the directive provides that the same conditions shall be imposed on non-member countries as those to which the Community countries are subject.

The trade organizations were consulted on this matter and were broadly in agreement on the main principles of the directive.
