

## 'High time' for EU cloning regulation

Written by Julie Levy-Abegnoli on 26 February 2015 in News  
News

MEPs have renewed talks on the cloning of animals for farming purposes.



Parliament's agriculture and rural affairs and environment, public health and food safety committees are drafting a joint report on the cloning of animals of the bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine and equine species kept and reproduced for farming purposes.

Animal cloning has long been a contentious issue in European politics, with parliament's agriculture and rural affairs co-rapporteur on the issue Giulia Moi pointing out that it all comes down to "deciding on the future of our food chain, our food habits and our society".

The commission had offered up a proposal on cloning back in 2011, as part of its report on novel foods, but this was rejected and the issue was brought to a legislative standstill. Yet Moi is hopeful that "the commission's proposals can be used as a starting point".

Novel foods refer to any foods that were not consumed to a significant extent within Europe before May 1997, which is when the current regulation came into force - foods produced using specific

technologies, or even foreign delicacies, for example.

The Italian deputy stressed that "among our priorities we must pay particular attention to the status of animals, which are sentient beings under the Lisbon treaty", adding, "animal welfare must be guaranteed on the same level as consumer safety and protection - the two must go hand in hand".

"We must ask ourselves if we really need cloning and the offspring of clones in order to be competitive on the global market" - Renate Sommer

Renate Sommer, co-rapporteur for parliament's environment, public health and food safety committee, said, "we need specific regulation on cloning and it is high time this happened".

However, she warned, "we must ask ourselves if we really need cloning and the offspring of clones in order to be competitive on the global market".

Addressing MEPs, European health and food safety commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis underlined that the focus must remain on "food safety, animal welfare, respect of genetic diversity, as well as innovation and welfare".

He highlighted that "all animals involved in cloning suffer, therefore the idea of manipulating animals as if they were objects creates understandable resentment".

Yet in spite of this, the commission is working on a proposal on animal cloning, which Andriukaitis said "should be ready in October 2015".

He explained that one of the important issues at hand is that of third countries, as in some parts of the world, animal cloning is legal and "the EU imports the semen of cloned offspring to inseminate animals".

The Lithuanian official outlined that "this leads to the issue of labelling - the commission's impact assessment on cloning examined various options and showed labelling of foods from offspring and descendants was difficult to implement so the measure was dropped, but we are committed to examining the issue further".

Meanwhile, the eurogroup for animals has written to MEPs from both committees, urging them to "introduce an immediate ban on the cloning of animals for food production, and on the import and sale of animal clones, their offspring and food products from animal clones and their offspring as well as semen and embryos from animal clones".

## **About the author**

Julie Levy-Abegnoli is a journalist and editorial assistant for the Parliament Magazine

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