

Brussels, 25 March 2009

No to food from cloned animals, says Parliament

Today an overwhelming majority of Members of the European Parliament voted against the authorisation of food products from cloned animals and their offspring.

Eurogroup for Animals welcomes the Parliament's call for a ban on the sale of food products from cloned animals and their offspring. This decision confirms the resolution adopted in the European Parliament last September.

Voting on the proposed regulation for the authorisation of novel foods, MEPs made clear that they want products from cloned animals and their offspring not to be regulated by this legislation, but that they want a specific Commission proposal to prohibit cloning of animals for food and the import of such products.

In July 2008, a report by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) confirmed that animals suffer as a result of this new reproduction technique while emphasizing there are still too many uncertainties about the technology. According to EU law breeding techniques that cause animals to suffer are not allowed.

Cloning is an incredibly wasteful process with only about five animals out of a 100 being born alive. Cloned animals die earlier and suffer from more defects than normal animals.

European citizens have clearly expressed their opposition to the use of this technique for food production: the results of a 2008 Eurobarometer survey show that nearly six out of ten people in Europe (58%) feel that animal cloning for food production will never be justified.

Sonja Van Tichelen, director of Eurogroup considers that the Commission is not respecting its own rules by delaying rules to ban the cloning of animals and by doing so the Commission is not only going against its own legal obligations, it is also ignoring the clear message sent by EU citizens: *"It is unacceptable that with so many facts and figures against animal cloning, the European Commission has not yet taken the decision to ban it. By not banning cloning for food production the Commission is telling its citizens that it finds trade concerns more important than animal suffering and the concerns of its citizens."*

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For more information call Liesbet Dendas, information officer at Eurogroup, on 0032 (0)2 7400890 or email her on l.dendas@eurogroupforanimals.org.

Notes:

- Eurogroup for Animals represents animal welfare organisations in nearly each of the EU member states. Since it was launched in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the European Union to adopt higher legal standards of animal protection. For more information about Eurogroup, visit www.eurogroupforanimals.org.
- The Eurobarometer on citizens views on cloning for food production was conducted among more than 25,000 randomly selected people from all 27 EU member states in July 2008.
- On 3 September 2008, MEPs adopted a resolution on the cloning of animals for food supply in which they also called for a ban on the cloning of animals and a ban on the trade of food products from cloned animals.
- Cloned animals die younger and suffer more defects than normal animals. Many clones suffer from defects such as contracted tendons, respiratory failure, limb and head deformities, heart disease and kidney problems. Dolly the sheep, the first mammal cloned from an adult cell, had to be put down at the early age of six after developing arthritis and lung disease. According to research by the National Institute for Agricultural Research in France, clones of cows reach puberty 62 days later and 56 kilos heavier than normal cows.
- Cloning for food is being opposed in Europe by organisations such as Scientists for Global Responsibility, Friends of the Earth, Centre for Sustainable Alternatives, European Public Health Alliance, European Farmers Coordination, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, FARM, Biodynamic Agricultural Association, and Euro Coop, the European Association of Consumer Cooperatives.
- The European Group on Ethics said in its final opinion published on 11 January 2008 that it “does not see convincing arguments to justify the production of food from clones and their offspring.