

Brussels, 3 September 2008

Commission urged to prohibit cloning for food after MEPs vote to support ban

European parliamentarians today voted with an overwhelming majority in favour of a proposal to ban cloning of animals for food. No fewer than 630 MEPs voted in favour and only 32 against. The motion for resolution was initiated by the Intergroup on Animal Welfare, and urges the Commission to prohibit cloning of animals for food and any products from cloned animals and their offspring. Cloning is an inefficient process that causes animals to suffer at every stage.

Neil Parish, president of the Parliamentary Intergroup on Animal Welfare, said: "Today MEPs showed they care about animals by voting for a ban on cloning for food. We now call on the Commission to follow their good example and come up with a strong proposal that will protect the welfare of animals."

The news has been welcomed by Eurogroup for Animals, which provides the secretariat for the Intergroup and which has been campaigning against cloning for food.

Director Sonja Van Tichelen said: "After MEPs voted with such an overwhelming majority to oppose cloning of animals for food, the Commission can't afford to ignore their message. It is now up to the Commission to take up the challenge and act to stop cloning of animals for food being approved in the EU.

"Cloned animals suffer from more defects and die earlier than conventionally bred animals. Consumers have not asked for cloning, so why put animals through the pain and distress involved with it?"

The results of a Eurobarometer survey on consumer attitudes towards cloning of animals for food will be published this autumn. After that the Commission is expected to publish its proposal.

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For more information or to receive a copy of the annual report call Steven Blaakman, senior press officer at Eurogroup, on 0032 (0)27400823 or email him on

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Notes:

- Eurogroup for Animals represents animal welfare organisations in nearly each of the European 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.
- 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 are 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 that it “does not see convincing arguments to justify the production of food from clones and their offspring”.
- The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its final opinion on 24 July this year, which outlined grave concerns over the impact of cloning on animal welfare while emphasising there are still too many uncertainties about the technology.