

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5171/07

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to the Commission

Subject: 'Bluetongue' crisis

The alarming situation for European cattle farming caused by the bluetongue crisis is spreading discouragement and despair amongst European cattle farmers, particularly those of southern Europe.

The animal health situation is extremely serious throughout the continent, with cases also being found in northern countries, and it demands that every possible effort be made, as appears to be happening, to obtain vaccines as soon as possible for the various serotypes of the virus.

The economic prejudice being suffered by several cattle farmers, in areas like Andalusia, is reaching disaster levels, which means that the measures in hand to tackle the disease are insufficient to resolve their situation, which is, furthermore, being made even worse by the rising price of inputs.

Does the Commission intend to activate any of the mechanisms provided for in the sector's COM, such as the 50% co-funded market measures, to alleviate the situation of the hardest-hit farmers?

Does it intend to implement specific collaborative action against the disease in North Africa, its origin and principal centre, and the source of the mass infections in the south of Europe?

Does the Commission think it would be possible, as some farmers' organisations are demanding, to uncouple aid completely, in line with the medical revision of the CAP, but without waiting until 2009, as a means of facilitating the sector's access to this aid?