

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4292/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Commission response to recent food scandals

The EU keeps a close watch on farmers. Why has it not cracked down on sales of dangerously contaminated food?

Numerous scandals involving food have come to light in Member States over the past few years. In Sweden it emerged last year that the sell-by dates on packs of minced meat were being altered in the shops. In the spring of this year many countries banned the sale of Italian buffalo milk mozzarella because it had been found to contain dioxin.

As regards the latest scandal, it has been revealed that, within the space of two years, as many as 40 Italian, British, German, and Austrian firms supplied three Italian cheese dairies and one in Germany with a total of 11 000 tonnes of curd that was past its best or unfit for human consumption. According to the Rome-based newspaper *La Repubblica* the rancid curd was riddled with scraps of plastic wrapping and labels – and mouse droppings.

- Why did EU food inspection again fail to prevent the latest scandal in time?
- What will the Commission do to rule out the possibility of similar cases in the future?
- Why is it that the authorities in Member States where tainted food has been sold have not been asked for exact information about the contaminated batches?
- Why have consumers not been given exact information about contaminated cheeses?