

**Question for written answer E-007404/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Hannu Takkula (ALDE)

Subject: Moderating the sanctions on bovine earmarks

For reasons of traceability in the food chain, each newly born calf must be registered and marked with two official earmarks approved by the Food Safety Authority.

The use of earmarks and the corresponding animal registries are monitored during farm visits by inspectors and veterinarians. Missing earmarks and errors in the animal registries result in penalties in the subsidies paid to the farmer. These penalties are currently double: they affect both animal premium elements and animal-based payments and area payments by means of cross-compliance. The sanctions resulting from these negligences may amount to tens of thousands of euros per farm.

As farming has developed, farms have also become bigger. In practice, real-time monitoring of whether all bovine earmarks stay in place is very difficult in big farms. The animals' natural behaviour and movements may cause the earmarks to fall off for natural reasons. An error in the animal registry may be created if, for example, a newly born calf is notified to the registry one day late or if the animal's purchase date is registered erroneously. Keeping the bovine registry up-to-date is crucial, but the current penalties for missing earmarks or errors in animal registries are too severe.

To remedy the situation, moderation is called for when it comes to monitoring penalties for bovine earmarking and registry errors. For example, the penalties for late veterinarian declarations should be reduced. Often the errors are unintentional. The producers know that late declarations are comprehensively detected in cross-checks. Severe penalties are therefore not needed for a deterrent effect.

Given the above, has the Commission considered actions to moderate the unreasonably high sanctions on earmark and registry errors as a part of simplifying the EU's agricultural policies?