

**Question for oral answer O-000020/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 128

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on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Subject: Price crisis in Europe's pig meat sector

The continuing Russian ban on EU food imports has removed the largest market for the EU's pig farmers. Consequently, the pig meat sector is facing severe difficulties, with significant downward pressure on prices which goes beyond the normal cyclical periods known in the pig meat sector. The average value of class E pig carcasses fell by 9 % in December 2015 alone and many farmers across the EU are selling pigs well below the cost of production.

Take-up of the latest Private Storage Aid (PSA) scheme was significantly higher than for previous schemes, with applications reaching 89 841 tonnes in mid to late January 2016. However, the PSA scheme has now been closed and has not been sufficient to stabilise prices and improve the market. Future stresses on the market may also occur when the product is eventually released from storage, and farmers in this sector may not be in a position to recover from any further fall in farm gate prices.

1. In view of this, does the Commission intend to take further action in relation to the PSA scheme?
2. What impact does the Commission anticipate the PSA scheme will have on the market and on price stability now and in the future?
3. Is the Commission taking steps to ensure that financial resources available under the PSA scheme reach and benefit primarily those farmers who are in difficulty and in urgent need of assistance, rather than other operators in the sector?
4. What action is the Commission taking with regard to the Russian bans, in particular the bans on pork fat, lard and offal products?

Tabled: 2.2.2016

Forwarded: 4.2.2016

Deadline for reply: 11.2.2016