Press release

Bluetongue disease: green light for more flexible use of new vaccines

Plenary sessions

Rules to enable new bluetongue vaccines to be used more efficiently, and thus make farmers' lives easier, were approved by the Parliament on Tuesday. If Member States put these rules into effect quickly, then the new vaccines could be used for the 2012 vaccination campaign.

To control the spread of the bluetongue disease better and make farmers' lives easier, the new rules will allow the use of new inactivated vaccines outside restricted areas where the disease has occurred recently. Unlike the live attenuated vaccines used in the past, the inactivated ones pose no risk of transmitting viruses to other animals.

Bluetongue is an insect-transmitted viral disease affecting ruminants (such as cattle, sheep and goats). Since the early 2000s several epidemic waves of disease have hit many EU Member States, causing significant losses of livestock.

Parliament approved the new rules, as agreed in a second reading compromise with the Council, without a vote.

Next Steps

The directive will come into force the day after its publication in the EU Official Journal. Member States will then have up to six months to transpose new rules into their national laws.

Procedure: Co-decision (2nd reading)

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