

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

FINAL
A5-0117/2001

3 April 2001

REPORT

on the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1251/1999 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops (COM(2001) 87 – C5-0083/2001 – 2001/0043(CNS))

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Rapporteur: Danielle Auroi

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
majority of the votes cast
- **I Cooperation procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- **II Cooperation procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- *** Assent procedure
*majority of Parliament's component Members except in cases
covered by Articles 105, 107, 161 and 300 of the EC Treaty and
Article 7 of the EU Treaty*
- ***I Codecision procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- ***II Codecision procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- ***III Codecision procedure (third reading)
majority of the votes cast, to approve the joint text

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the Commission)

Amendments to a legislative text

In amendments by Parliament, amended text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Highlighting in *normal italics* is an indication for the relevant departments showing parts of the legislative text for which a correction is proposed, to assist preparation of the final text (for instance, obvious errors or omissions in a given language version). These suggested corrections are subject to the agreement of the departments concerned.

CONTENTS

	Page
PROCEDURAL PAGE	4
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL	5
DRAFT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION.....	9
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	10

PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 27 February 2001 the Council consulted Parliament, pursuant to Articles 36 and 37 of the EC Treaty, on the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1251/1999 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops (COM(2001) 87 - 2001/0043 (CNS)).

At the sitting of 28 February 2001 the President of Parliament announced that she had referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development as the committee responsible and the Committee on Budgets for its opinion (C5-0083/2001).

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development had appointed Danielle Auroi rapporteur at its meeting of 27 February 2001.

By letter of 30 March 2001, the Council requested the application of urgent procedure for discussion pursuant to Article 112 of the Rules of Procedure.

The committee considered the Commission proposal and draft report at its meetings of 27 March 2001 and 2 April 2001.

At the latter meeting it adopted the draft legislative resolution unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf (chairman), Joseph Daul and Vincenzo Lavarra (vice-chairmen), Danielle Auroi (rapporteur), Gordon J. Adam, Alexandros Baltas (for António Campos), Jean-Louis Bernié (for Michel Raymond pursuant to Rule 153(2)), Carlos Bautista Ojeda, Niels Busk, Avril Doyle (for Neil Parish), Christel Fiebigler, Francesco Fiori, Georges Garot, Lutz Goepel, Willi Görlach, María Izquierdo Rojo, Elisabeth Jeggle, Salvador Jové Peres, Hedwig Keppelhoff-Wiechert, Heinz Kindermann, Christa Klač (for Michl Ebner), Albert Jan Maat, Xaver Mayer, María Rodríguez Ramos, Agnes Schierhuber, Dominique F.C. Souchet, Robert William Sturdy and Eurig Wyn (for Giorgio Celli).

The Committee on Budgets decided on 2 April 2001 not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 3 April 2001.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

Proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1251/1999 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops (COM(2001) 87 – C5-0083/2001 – 2001/0043(CNS))

The proposal is amended as follows:

Text proposed by the Commission ¹	Amendments by Parliament
Amendment 1 Recital 3	
(3) Growing fodder legumes is an agronomic practice that restores the soil's fertility in a natural way; the extension of such crops is therefore important for developing organic production of agricultural products.	(3) Growing fodder legumes is an agronomic practice that restores the soil's fertility in a natural way; the extension of such crops is therefore important for developing sustainable production of high-quality agricultural products.

Justification

The growing of fodder legumes is a sound, environmentally-friendly farming practice which should be encouraged both in the organic production sector and in high-quality conventional production.

Amendment 2 Recital 4	
To encourage the development of organic production methods, the use of land set aside under the support scheme for arable crops in order to grow fodder legumes on agricultural holdings taking part for the totality of the production in the scheme provided for in Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 should be authorised.	To encourage the development of production methods that take environmental requirements into account , the use of land set aside under the support scheme for arable crops in order to grow all types of fodder legumes should be authorised, as a first step , on agricultural holdings taking part for the totality of the production in the scheme provided for in Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 or taking part in an agri-environment programme under Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999. In addition, from 2002 onwards, it should be

¹ OJ C not yet published.

permissible to grow fodder legumes on land set aside on conventional livestock holdings.

Justification

The use of set-aside land to grow all types of fodder legumes would result in crop diversification and greater extensification in farming, not only in organic farming.

Amendment 3
Recital 4a (new)

To encourage the development of protein-rich crops within the EU, the use of land set aside under the support scheme for arable crops should be authorised to grow protein-rich crops such as oilseeds, linseed, peas, beans and lupins.

Justification

Action must be taken to ensure that the protein deficit caused by the BSE crisis is remedied by the production of additional vegetable protein within the EU.

Amendment 4
ARTICLE 1(1)

Article 6(3), first subparagraph (Regulation (EC) No 1251/1999)

1. The first subparagraph of Article 6(3) is replaced by the following:

"3. The land set aside may be used for:

- producing materials for the manufacture within the Community of products not directly intended for human or animal consumption, provided that effective controls are applied,
- growing legume crops on a agricultural holding, for the totality of its production, in compliance with the obligations laid down in Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91."

1. The first subparagraph of Article 6(3) is replaced by the following:

"3. The land set aside may be used for:

- producing materials for the manufacture within the Community of products not directly intended for human or animal consumption, provided that effective controls are applied,
- growing legume crops on a agricultural holding, for the totality of its production, in compliance with the obligations laid down in Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 ***or on organic holdings taking part in agri-environmental measures under Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999 on support for rural development. From 2002 onwards, this measure may also be extended to conventional livestock holdings.***"

Justification

Action to extend the growing of fodder legumes on holdings operating in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1257/1994 on support for rural development would be an initial interim measure aimed at boosting Europe's protein supply. This could help reduce Europe's dependence on imports of soya meal, much of which is genetically modified. In addition, livestock farmers must be given the opportunity to use land set aside to grow fodder legumes.

Amendment 5
ARTICLE 1(2)

The ninth indent of the first paragraph of Article 9 is replaced by the following:
' – those relating to set-aside, and in particular those relating to Article 6(3);
these conditions shall define the fodder legumes

The ninth indent of the first paragraph of Article 9 is replaced by the following:
' – those relating to set-aside, and in particular those relating to Article 6(3);
these conditions shall define the fodder legumes ***and protein-rich crops*** that may

that may be grown on land set aside and, with regard to the first indent of the first subparagraph of that paragraph, may include the growing of crops without compensation,'.

be grown on land set aside and, with regard to the first indent of the first subparagraph of that paragraph, may include the growing of crops without compensation,'.

Justification

Action must be taken to ensure that the protein deficit caused by the BSE crisis is remedied by the production of additional vegetable protein within the EU.

Amendment 6
ARTICLE 2

It shall apply from the 2001/02 marketing year.

The changes to this Regulation shall enter into force immediately so as to enable crops to be harvested as from 15 August 2001.

Justification

If this measure is to be effective, it must enter into force with immediate effect so as to allow crops to be sown as soon as possible and the first harvest to be gathered after 15 August 2001.

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1251/1999 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops (COM(2001) 87 – C5-0083/2001 – 2001/0043(CNS))

(Consultation procedure)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the amended Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2001) 87¹),
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Articles 36 and 37 of the EC Treaty (C5-0083/2001),
 - having regard to Rule 67 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A5-0117/2001),
1. Approves the Commission proposal as amended;
 2. Calls on the Commission to alter its proposal accordingly, pursuant to Article 250(2) of the EC Treaty;
 3. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament should it intend to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
 4. Asks to be consulted again if the Council intends to amend the Commission proposal substantially;
 5. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and Commission.

¹ OJ C not yet published.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

It is against the difficult background of the BSE crisis and as a matter of urgency that the Commission has been prompted to propose amendments to the Council regulation establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops.

This proposal is one of the measures in the seven-point plan being submitted to Parliament by the Commission. Aside from its urgency, this measure follows on directly from the White Paper on food safety which included in its proposals the incorporation of problems associated with the production of animal feed.

The proposal also addresses the problem of the production of vegetable protein needed to ensure suitable feedingstuffs for bovine animals. There is a deficit in such production in Europe as a result, *inter alia*, of the Blair House agreements. The set-aside arrangements laid down resulted in arable land lying fallow while, at the same time, livestock were being fed on animal protein, including some from animal meal.

In order to enable all livestock again to be fed with more wholesome feedingstuffs, and in order to overcome the BSE crisis, it is essential that these set-aside arrangements be amended so as to encourage production of fodder crops.

Comments on the Commission proposal

The Commission proposal represents a step in the right direction, although the change proposed is only marginal in relation to the Regulation as a whole. Nonetheless, the change may be either of simply symbolic value, or it could be the trigger for an examination leading to eventual reform of Agenda 2000.

The aim of the measures proposed is to move, initially, from set-aside towards arrangements, limited to the organic farming sector, intended to increase rotation of crops. The effect of such arrangements would be to enhance the use of certain land set aside by the planting of crops such as clover, broad beans, and field beans and peas. This would have a positive effect in terms of promoting a more natural approach to livestock rearing because it would be associated with the production of fodder. In addition, it would have a positive impact on the environment, since we now know that set-aside is often harmful to the environment. Rather than encouraging mass-production of protein and oleaginous crops and promoting rotation through payments linked to area or to volumes, this adjustment to the rules will allow the partial lifting of the set-aside requirement in order to grow fodder legumes not for human consumption. It represents a step in the direction of reform of the CAP along the lines of the high-quality livestock farming and extensive production which we would all like to see.

The question is whether this should be limited to boosting organic farming on the basis of Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 or whether it is possible to go further. In the latter case, conventional farm holdings should be allowed to benefit from the same possibilities if they are willing to restrict themselves to planting on their land set aside only the fodder crops listed in Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 603/95.

The obligation to complement the growing of cereals with legumes and fodder crops in order

to receive subsidies can thus contribute towards establishing ecological cycles and improving the soil. Such a commitment, associated with good farming practice, would permit the restoration of good rotation of crops, such as is found in organic farming.

However, if we confine ourselves to lifting the set-aside requirement only for organic farming, we shall be making no more than cosmetic changes which do not affect either the obligations under Agenda 2000 or those under WTO international agreements. In extending the measure to all conventional holdings moving towards more extensive production, the European Union may well be challenged by other WTO members. It is, however, a risk worth taking if it contributes towards the development of an approach which would enable us to overcome the successive food crises we have recently been experiencing. It should be pointed out that recent reforms of the common agricultural policy, and in particular the decisions taken in Berlin in 1999 as part of Agenda 2000, were intended to curb spending on agriculture, cut guaranteed prices and make Community production more competitive on world markets. Unfortunately, those decisions did not take sufficient account of the quality of agricultural products, protection of the environment or the sustainable development of rural areas. It should also be pointed out that, when the CAP was first introduced in the 1960s, the European Union – in order to protect its cereals production – negotiated duty-free imports of vegetable proteins and oilseeds with the United States. In order to control cereal surpluses, it became necessary in 1992 to introduce set-aside arrangements, allowing only non-food products to be grown on the land concerned.

The 'mad cow disease' crisis and the ban on animal meal have drawn attention to the deficit in Community production of vegetable proteins. Against the background of the current crisis, it is, therefore, essential to introduce measures which, whilst they need to be adopted swiftly, must not be conceived as emergency measures. The amendments to this Regulation can, therefore, only be regarded as a first step. For the sake of coherence, a review of Agenda 2000 needs to be carried out, at least a mid-term review, with regard to the allocation of support for arable crops. Support for irrigated maize crops and support for fodder crops cannot continue to be covered by the same legal act in the longer term. Following this initial readjustment, we should initiate a wider examination in order to analyse the results of the review of Agenda 2000 and propose the necessary medium- and long-term changes.

Rapporteur's recommendations

Restoring fodder crops on some land set aside is a positive step in the direction of high-quality livestock farming and more extensive production.

Whilst the Commission proposal restricts authorisation to organic farmers, your rapporteur recommends going further, as fodder crops do not demand a high level of inputs and they allow the land to be used in an environmentally-friendly way at the same time as providing wholesome, high-quality livestock feed. That is the purpose of the amendments tabled.