

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0814/00

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to the Commission

Subject: Transhumance of cattle

The identification and registration of cattle is an essential precondition for ensuring full traceability in connection with compulsory beef labelling. The practice of transhumance creates a special situation in Member States with mountainous and alpine regions. Each year in the spring in Austria alone approximately 300 000 cattle and in Bavaria approximately 54 000 cattle are moved to upland pastures and remain there for around three months. As a rule, these upland pastures are common grazing land on which livestock from different holdings is assembled and tended jointly. The keeping of transhumance lists means that each animal can be allocated to its holding of origin.

Regulation 820/97¹ establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals makes no provision for taking into account these specific requirements and simplified arrangements in relation to the registration of cattle moved to upland pastures for summer grazing.

1. How does the Commission view the special case of transhumance and the presence of cattle on upland pastures in relation to registration and/or the transhumance lists that are already kept?
2. The current registration requirements relating to transhumance impose a costly and time-consuming administrative burden far in excess of what is necessary. Is the Commission prepared to give thought here to a simplified arrangement inspired by practical considerations?
3. Can it propose a more practicable and practice-oriented approach?
4. Is it prepared to leave to the Member States the responsibility for assessing the requirements of a practice-oriented system of registration?

¹ OJ L 117, 7.5.1997, p. 1.