

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4074/00

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to the Council

Subject: Increasing production of feed proteins in response to the recent ban on use of animal meal

The ban on animal meal in farm animal feed will increase the Community's demand for vegetable protein. It is necessary to meet that demand without increasing either our dependence on imports or our exposure to GMOs.

Does the Council intend to implement an emergency plan for increasing Community production of vegetable protein along the following lines?

1. As regards protein crops such as peas, field beans and lupins, which are not subject to any international restrictions, raising payments per hectare would be the key factor.
2. As regards the Blair House agreements, limits on Community production of 'food' oilseeds to 4 934 000 ha will end in 2002 with the removal of specific aid, which is to be replaced, in accordance with Agenda 2000, by compensatory aid common to all arable crops. The critical year will therefore be 2001, for which a derogation for reasons of 'force majeure' will have to be negotiated with our partners in order to allow areas to be increased on the basis of the current level of aid.
3. As regards dehydrated fodder, given that alfalfa is an entirely wholesome source of protein we can substantially increase the maximum guaranteed quantity and aid per tonne for artificially dried fodder.
4. The Union needs to find ways of making the growing of oil crops for biofuel purposes more attractive. Apart from its impact on the greenhouse gas effect, each tonne of biofuel produced gives as a by-product two tonnes of oilcake (sunflower or rape).
5. As part of environmental measures and in order to curb the trend towards single cereal crop farming in some regions, incentives for diversified rotation, more open than the current agri-environmental measure for sunflowers, should be introduced.
6. Finally, the Community must provide a safety net for European producers of oilseeds and protein crops in the form of a price guarantee comparable to that granted to American soya producers.