

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0072/01
by Elisabeth Jeggle (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Possible EU measures to support agriculture during the BSE crisis

The BSE crisis is the cause of the sharp fall in demand for beef products of all kinds. This has further exacerbated the critical situation of farmers' incomes and some farms are in danger of going under. The same applies to slaughterhouses.

1. In response to EU requirements, Germany is to test for BSE in all female animals over 30 months old which are covered by the EU purchase-for-destruction scheme. Does the Commission see any possibility of taking meat that tests negative into intervention?
2. It would not seem possible to comply with the requests of the Federal Institute of Agriculture and Food to take bulls into intervention. Does the Commission see any possibility of placing greater emphasis on whether the meat is 'fit for consumption' as a criterion for being taken into intervention? Can intervention be opened for bulls over 24 months, at least temporarily?
3. Does the Commission see any possibility of raising the slaughter premium for calves of between 1 and 7 months weighing less than 159.6 kg from the current DM 65:- to the level paid for adult cattle (DM 129:-)?
4. Is it possible to pay bull-fatteners a premium equal to the special premium for male cattle for unoccupied fattening places (extensification) in order to relieve pressure on the market?
5. What is the Commission doing to shed light on the emergence and transmission of BSE? Is it participating in the development of tests on live animals? Is there a timetable?
6. The end of animal-and-bone meal has led to a rise in demand for vegetable protein. Can exceptional arrangements be made for 2001 whereby farmers may grow protein crops on their own set-aside land for their own use on a scale equivalent to the farm's average annual animal production?
7. Owing to the suspension of slaughtering, it is possible that the density coefficient of 2.0 LU/ha cannot be met. How will that be taken into account in terms of the volume of animal premiums and the extensification premiums under the agricultural programmes?