

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0830/04
by Alexander de Roo (Verts/ALE)
to the Council

Subject: Vaccination of pet farm animals

The number of hobby farmers in Europe is growing rapidly. There are already 250 000 hobby farmers in the Netherlands alone. These farmers own chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, swans, quails, pheasants, peacocks, partridges and walking birds (ostriches, emu and nandos) and doves that are not kept for consumption.

As a result of the outbreak of avian influenza in 2003, I asked the Commission a number of questions on the preventive culling of poultry kept by hobby farmers (Written Question E-1401/03¹).

In answer to my question, Commissioner Byrne indicated, on 2 June 2003, that the decision to introduce emergency vaccination around an outbreak may be taken by an affected Member State, following notification to the Commission. The Member State is free to choose between preventive culling and preventive vaccination, in both cases following notification to the Commission.

This means that, in practice, pet farm animals may be vaccinated.

The European Commission and the Council of Agriculture Ministers are currently drawing up a new law.

How will the position of hobby farmers be regulated in the new law: is there to be a separate status for pet farm animals (with the possibility of preventive vaccination), or will the possibility remain that pet farm animals will still have to be culled?

¹ OJ C 268 E, 7.11.2003, p. 196.