

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1068/09
by Ashley Mote (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Manure problems for dairy farmers

Why is the new regulation on the spreading of manure on farmland to be forced on small dairy farmers who have safely spread dung on grassland for centuries without harming the environment or the water table? What evidence does the Commission hold to suggest otherwise? The farmers in my constituency would like to see it.

Is this not an extension of the pesticides directive, which was based on the absurd notion that, because the Danes do not process ground water before drinking it, the rest of the EU must stop using many crucial pesticides?

Many small farmers have nowhere to store the accumulation of dung from their herds during the winter, and some will go out of business as a result. Does the prospect of importing yet more dairy produce from South America, for example, make any sense? Does the Commission realise that that will be a direct consequence of this directive?

Why, in addition, has the Commission decided that the water table is no longer at risk - even if it was in the first place - on precisely 15 January each year?

Is the Commission not aware that the following month has always been known amongst farmers as 'fill dyke February' precisely because that is when the water table is fully replenished each year?