

**Question for written answer E-002922/2012
to the Commission
Rule 117
Kyriakos Mavronikolas (S&D)**

Subject: 'Method of production' labelling for animal-derived food

The new EU strategy recognises that consumers are not always well informed about today's farming methods and their impact on the welfare of animals. Labelling is an important mechanism for raising EU standards as regards the welfare of farm animal. It enables consumers to make informed choices, and provides producers with the means clearly to differentiate marketed products with higher welfare standards. From the information currently presented on the label, consumers cannot determine whether the meat or milk they are buying comes from a production system that is animal-welfare friendly. This underscores the urgent need for a labelling scheme that informs consumers about the farming system used to produce meat and dairy products, such as the one already in place for eggs.

The development of a new, EU-wide labelling scheme for meat and dairy products that have been produced in keeping with good standards for animal welfare would stimulate the entire EU market for products with higher welfare standards.

Labelling should be based on the method of production, giving consumers the type of information they want most, and should be applied to products imported into the EU as well as to domestically produced food.

Additionally, effective labelling should be mandatory and not voluntary, in order to avoid that only products farmed according to higher standards of animal welfare are labelled. The mandatory EU egg-labelling regime provides a successful precedent for such a scheme, using simple and clear terms that are easily understood by consumers.

Finally, the success of the EU egg-labelling scheme clearly shows that such a scheme should also be put in place for animal-derived food products.

What does the Commission intend to do as regards adopting effective labelling for animal-derived food products?