

**Question for written answer E-004482/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Agnès Le Brun (PPE)

Subject: Animal welfare and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement

As a member of the World Trade Organisation, the European Union is part of a broad movement to open up markets. Even though the agricultural sector is one in which very little progress has been made in negotiations, the common agricultural policy (CAP) is drawn up, as far as possible, according to these principles.

While the European Union can protect its market from imported foodstuffs that do not meet the safety criteria that it has laid down thanks to the agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, it cannot do anything to oppose competition from products that do not comply with the same animal welfare standards.

European livestock farming is thus subject to unfair competition from third countries, and the WTO prevents the EU from protecting it.

1. Does the Commission have any figures which can be used to assess the impact of these distortions of competition on the competitiveness of European farms?
2. Does the Commission take account of this situation when it makes legislative proposals on animal welfare?
3. Does the Commission plan to take action, internally or within the WTO, to put an end to this unfair competition, which is seriously damaging the economic well-being of certain sectors? If so, can it say what this action is?