

**Question for written answer E-013512/2013  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: 'Thousand-cow farm' project in France

An industrial-scale farm which will house 500 dairy cows and the same number of heifers is being built in the Picardy region of France with funding from a construction industry entrepreneur. Ultimately, the plan is that it should house 1 000 cows and almost as many in-calf heifers.

Cows on this kind of farm never see daylight. In keeping with the US farming model, they live in extremely cramped conditions, with just 10 m<sup>2</sup> of space each. They are fed on huge quantities of off-farm products, which are, for the most part, imported from non-EU countries.

One of Europe's largest biogas production plants is to be built next to the farm. The project's main purpose would thus seem to be energy, rather than dairy, production.

This kind of mammoth project is at odds with everything the EU stands for as regards the environment and quality of life.

The presence of so many animals in such a small area would lead to outbreaks of disease, the cows would suffer serious hardship and the risk of water contamination would be high, while the constant comings and goings of lorries would further damage the environment.

1. Is the Commission aware of this project and of the countless problems it will cause?
2. Does it intend to conduct an assessment of the impact of an industrial-scale farm of this kind?
3. Is this kind of project consistent with the Commission's approach to sustainable agricultural development, the environment, employment and life in rural areas?