

**Question for written answer E-000549/2020
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Virginie Joron (ID)

Subject: Revised import quotas for US beef and animal welfare

On 28 November 2019, Parliament approved the allocation of a tariff rate quota for imports of 'high-quality' beef from the United States ¹.

The existing quota will remain unchanged, but of the 45 000 tonnes which make up the total tariff rate quota, 35 000 will be reserved for the United States.

Although the animals are not supposed to be treated with growth-promoting hormones, the quality of the meat exported to Europe will remain questionable. American cattle are generally reared on intensive farms, and some of the beef is obtained using halal slaughtering methods ².

In the European Union, labelling halal meat as 'organic' is strictly forbidden ³. In the United States, however, beef from ritually slaughtered cattle can be labelled in that way ⁴.

Parliament's resolution does not mention any requirement for imported beef to come from animals slaughtered in a manner respectful of their dignity ⁵.

1. Can consumers be sure of the origin and quality of the imported beef? Can they also be sure that proper checks have been carried out on it?
2. Under the current agreement, is it possible for European consumers to eat halal meat imported from the US without realising it?
3. Will meat from ritually slaughtered animals be included in the import quota? If so, will this meat be clearly identified for the benefit of consumers, for example by means of labels?

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0075_EN.html

² <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/04/05/599520906/you-might-be-eating-halal-meat-and-not-even-know-it> and <https://www.animallaw.info/article/detailed-discussion-humane-methods-slaughter-act>

³ <https://organic-market.info/news-in-brief-and-reports-article/no-eu-organic-label-for-halal-meat.html>

⁴ <https://www.ofwlaw.com/2017/01/25/usda-guarantees-kosher-halal-meat-can-organic/>

⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0076_EN.html