

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0352/02
by Francesco Fiori (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Classification of 'fresh pasteurised milk'

Current Community legislation on the labelling, presentation and advertising of food products lays down rules to protect the consumer, stipulating that packages should clearly indicate not only the exact nature but also the characteristics of products.

Community legal provisions concerning the production and marketing of milk for human consumption do not cover the product classified as 'fresh pasteurised milk', but only the more general category of pasteurised milk.

The specific provisions laid down in Italian Law No 169 of 3 May 1989 are still fully and legitimately applicable in their entirety, since over the years they have not been subjected to any modification or censure at Community level.

The circular of 2 August 2000 issued by the Ministry for Manufacturing authorised, in blatant contrast with the provisions of joint legislation for the protection of consumers' rights, the sale in Italy of products which, whilst also labelled as 'fresh pasteurised milk', not only differ in taste and quality, but also have a different shelf life.

This initiative seems to be in blatant conflict with the aims of European legislation on the labelling of food products, in particular the provisions of EU Directive 13/2000¹, since it is likely to mislead consumers and not allow them to make informed and wise choices.

Does the Commission intend to take further steps to:

- censure the Italian Ministry's initiative;
- put forward proposals to guarantee accurate consumer information regarding the actual freshness of milk marketed for direct human consumption;
- specify clearly that the freshness of milk for direct human consumption is closely linked not only to the short time elapsing between the milking of the cow and its reaching the final consumer, but also the shelf life, which should not have been extended by the use of processes other than or additional to low-temperature pasteurisation.

¹ OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29