

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3904/06  
by Béatrice Patrie (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: European rules to govern Integrated Production in the fruit and vegetable sector

For more than ten years fruit and vegetable producers have been using production methods that preserve the environment and provide security for both those engaged in the sector and consumers.

All aspects of production are formalised in Integrated Production schedules, recognised by the relevant regional or national authorities and overseen by accredited independent bodies.

The aim of Integrated Production is to market fruit and vegetables of optimum quality in terms of both health aspects and taste, which also make a full contribution to preserving the natural biological balance and soil fertility.

In the view of the industry, Integrated Production is a key element in food safety.

Today more than 60% of fruit and vegetable production in the major European producer countries falls within this movement.

Most European countries apply Integrated Production methods, but in an unharmonised manner. The absence of a common legal base at European level has led to a proliferation of private production schedules, usually initiated by the large organised distribution networks.

Consumers, who should in fact be the main beneficiaries, are therefore unable to receive or understand the message intended for them, even though they are increasingly concerned by the quality of their food.

This being the case, does the Commission envisage undertaking European harmonisation through the introduction of European public rules on Integrated Production? What time frame could be envisaged?