

Subject: Bovine tuberculosis outbreak in Trentino (Val di Sole)

In view of the fact that, under Decision 2003/467/EC¹, the EU formally recognised the Autonomous Province of Trento as being officially free of tuberculosis, brucellosis and enzootic bovine leukosis, that Autonomous Province had not conducted any corresponding health checks, and in particular any bovine tuberculosis checks, until 18.01.2008. On 02.01.2008, the provincial health agency officially launched a tuberculosis outbreak procedure, in response to findings from the Veneto regional health authorities in the province of Padua concerning tests on meat from a slaughtered bovine animal that had originated from the province of Trento (and more precisely the municipality of Rabbi). The health checks that had not been conducted for a good four years were therefore reintroduced. 14 dossiers were opened on tuberculosis outbreaks in Valle di Sole and Valle di Non in the province of Trento.

This is a cause for extreme concern because, given the great mobility of means of transport, people and cattle, owing to the globalisation that now affects everyone, not having any checks for a good four years is a serious matter. If one also considers the practice of summer mountain pasturing, where the underlying danger of contagion is ever-present, the decision not to conduct animal health checks in the area can be viewed as detrimental to mountain farmers and dairy and cheese producers, who are already experiencing great hardship and a lack of security in the context of family businesses, the income from these and the processing of raw milk. A recent study conducted by the Stelvio National Park shows that a high percentage of the local deer population frequently contract paratuberculosis, statistics on which have been drawn up by Triveneto Institute for the Prevention of Animal Diseases. Complaints have also been recorded from farmers who have seen over 50% of the produce delivered to the cheese factory at Fivè for processing being thrown into various watercourses. Of no less concern are the statements made by some employees at the Latte Trento dairy, revealing discreditable operations in the laboratories there.

Can the Commission therefore indicate:

- whether it and the health authorities of the Autonomous Province of Trento have taken all the appropriate steps to counter the danger of the spread of contagion;
- whether financial, majority support, measures have been adopted for the areas declared to be disease free (see subsidies paid by the EU to the Province of Trento over the last four years), and if so which bodies have implemented those funds, on what scale and to whom?

¹ OJ L 156, 25.6.2003, p. 74.