

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1055/09
by Sebastiano Sanzarelli (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Compensation for the withdrawal and destruction of Irish pork contaminated by dioxin

Further to the notification via the alert system (2008.1584) of the presence of dioxins and PCB in Irish pork, the Irish authorities identified the source of contamination as being the feed used on pig farms and on a number of cattle farms. The risk of contamination was limited to pigs slaughtered from 1 September to 6 December 2008. In the extraordinary meeting of the Food Chain Committee held in Brussels on 10 December 2008 it was decided to withdraw and destroy all pig meat from Ireland produced between 1 September and 6 December 2008. On 18 December 2008 the Management Committee for the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets - animal products section - approved a regulation providing for Community co-financing to the tune of 50% for the destruction of Irish pig meat and beef/veal; Ireland therefore undertook to compensate the operators of the EU countries involved in this matter. The Commission, when questioned in the parliamentary sitting of 19 January 2008, ruled out the possibility of compensation for processed products. In Italy, unlike food traditions in other countries, most pig meat products are subject to a period of dry-curing or fermentation and therefore those products that were being prepared during the unsafe period are still present on the market even though they should have been recalled. Moreover, during the processing, meat of different origins was used, thereby causing even further damage.

In view of the above, what action does the Commission intend to take to ensure that the damage done to the processing industry by the presence of dioxins in Irish pig meat is suitably compensated, and to prevent the special intervention measures from compensating only Irish farms which, moreover, had benefited from using cheaper feed which actually caused the contamination in question?