

Production of fishmeal and fish oil

European Parliament resolution of 10 July 2007 on industrial fisheries and the production of fishmeal and fish oil (2004/2262(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the ban on feeding fishmeal to ruminants imposed by the Commission in 2001, a precautionary measure introduced by Council Decision 2000/766/EC of 4 December 2000 concerning certain protection measures with regard to transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and the feeding of animal protein¹ and later consolidated in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1234/2003 of 10 July 2003² amending Annexes I, IV and XI to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001, laying down conditions under which the Member States could authorise the feeding of fishmeal to non-ruminant animals (Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 as amended),
- having regard to the 2004 working paper of the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Research entitled 'The Fish Meal and Fish Oil Industry – Its Role in the Common Fisheries Policy',
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies³, as amended in particular by Regulation (EC) No 1923/2006 of 18 December 2006⁴, and to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1292/2005 of 5 August 2005 amending Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards animal nutrition⁵, adopted by the Commission following the development of a validated method (see Commission Directive 2003/126/EC of 23 December 2003 on the analytical method for the determination of constituents of animal origin for the official control of feedingstuffs⁶) that enables the detection of mammalian meat and bone meal in animal feed even where there is fishmeal in the same feed, and recognising that the basis for prohibiting the feeding of fishmeal to ruminants is therefore no longer valid and that the prohibition should be lifted,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 October 2004 on the draft of the abovementioned Commission Regulation⁷, calling for the withdrawal thereof, and taking the view that the feeding of fishmeal to ruminants is not consistent with the duty imposed on the Community to protect the health of its citizens,
- having regard to the maximum allowable levels of undesirable substances in animal feed

¹ OJ L 306, 7.12.2000, p. 32.

² OJ L 173, 11.7.2003, p. 6.

³ OJ L 147, 31.5.2001, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 722/2007 (OJ L 164, 26.6.2007, p. 7).

⁴ OJ L 404, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 205, 6.8.2005, p. 3.

⁶ OJ L 339, 24.12.2003, p. 78.

⁷ OJ C 174 E, 14.7.2005, p. 178.

set out in Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 May 2002 on undesirable substances in animal feed⁸, amended in 2003 to include dioxins by Commission Directive 2003/57/EC of 17 June 2003⁹ and further amended by Commission Directive 2003/100/EC of 31 October 2003¹⁰,

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on improving the monitoring of industrial fishing within the EU (COM(2004)0167) which aims at establishing transparent and effective monitoring of industrial landings throughout the Community,
 - having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 17 May 2006 on rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies¹¹,
 - having regard to the answers provided by the European Food Safety Authority to the questions submitted by the European Parliament on 26 October 2005,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A6-0155/2005),
- A. whereas it is necessary for the stability of the fishmeal and fish oil industry to deal in a coherent way with questions of ethics, sustainability, toxins, heavy metals and pollutants which are sometimes raised,
- B. whereas there is no scientific evidence that the use of fish products in animal feed might transmit BSE or TSEs; whereas strict regulatory controls, together with extensive investment by the industry, have ensured the safety of the food chain from contamination by dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs,
- C. whereas because of improved official methods there is no risk of confusing the presence of mammalian meat and bone meal with fishmeal,
- D. whereas fishmeal is rich in essential amino acids, and fish oil and fishmeal are rich in fatty acids, which provide health and welfare benefits to both humans and animals,
- E. whereas, whilst there are diverse opinions on the effects of industrial fishing and too much reliance should not be placed upon single sources of information, the results of the 2004 ICES study suggested that the impact of industrial fishing on marine eco-systems is relatively small in comparison with the effects of fishing for human consumption,
- F. whereas, nevertheless, research should continue into the impact of industrial fishing on marine eco-systems and the wider environment,
- G. whereas all the countries and regions supplying the EU with fishmeal support and implement the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries,

⁸ OJ L 140, 30.5.2002, p. 10. Directive as last amended by Commission Directive 2006/77/EC (OJ L 271, 30.9.2006, p. 53).

⁹ OJ L 151, 19.6.2003, p. 38.

¹⁰ OJ L 285, 1.11.2003, p. 33.

¹¹ OJ C 297 E, 7.12.2006, p. 219.

- H. whereas the 2004 DG Research working paper stated that in EU waters most of the targeted species for which data is available are considered to be within safe biological limits,
- I. whereas the fishmeal and fish oil industry is of global importance, employing an estimated 2 222 people directly and 30 000 indirectly in Europe, and more than 100 000 people in Peru, the largest fishmeal producer and exporter,
- J. whereas fishmeal and fish oil are of crucial importance as a basic feed stock for farmed fish in the EU's burgeoning aquaculture sector,
1. Recognises that the Commission currently applies the principle of setting TACs and quotas according to certain scientific criteria and considers the use of fish once landed to be an economic and not a conservation issue;
 2. Welcomes the abovementioned Commission Communication on improving the monitoring of industrial fishing within the EU;
 3. Stresses the importance of continuing research into the impact of industrial fisheries and its effect on other fisheries as well as on the wider marine environment, with a view to keeping all fishing activities at a sustainable level and rewarding those fishermen using the most environmentally friendly techniques;
 4. Asks the Commission to increase scientific research on blue whiting in order to obtain improved advice and management in the near future;
 5. Stresses the problem of discards from marine fisheries, given that there are estimated to be up to 1 million tonnes of discards in European fisheries annually;
 6. Calls on the Commission to carry out studies and/or pilot projects to investigate the current situation concerning discards and the possibility of their use by the industrial fishing sector so that, under no circumstances, could it lead to an over-exploitation of resources;
 7. Suggests that the use of discards by the fishmeal and fish oil industry should be examined by the Commission in close relation with Parliament's Committee on Fisheries given the swiftly expanding EU aquaculture sector;
 8. Stresses the controls in place in the EU to limit the presence of undesirable substances and contaminants in animal feed, ensuring that levels in fishmeal and fish oil remain well within the limits, and welcomes the EUR 25 million investment by the fishmeal and fish oil industry in Denmark and the UK aimed at eliminating dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs and ensuring safe and healthy products; calls on the Commission and the Member States to monitor closely the application of the existing controls;
 9. Notes with approval that this investment by the industry was willingly undertaken despite the lack of adoption by the EU of the 'polluter pays' principle;
 10. Stresses the need for the industry to apply the ALARA (as low as reasonably achievable) principle at all times when dealing with dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs;
 11. Calls for scientific analysis to determine acceptable limit values for dioxins in fishmeal

used for feeding pigs and poultry;

12. Stresses that there is no scientific evidence to support a total ban on fishmeal as feed on the ground that it may transmit BSE or other TSEs;
13. Notes that Regulation (EC) No 1923/2006 prohibits the feeding of animal protein to ruminants, but enables the Commission to grant derogations for feeding fishmeal to young ruminants, provided that such derogations are based on a scientific assessment of the dietary needs of young ruminants and follow an assessment of the control aspects;
14. Recalls its abovementioned position adopted on 17 May 2006, which provided, in relation to Article 7 of that Regulation, for a derogation allowing, in certain circumstances, the feeding of young animals of ruminant species with proteins derived from fish;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Council to lift the ban on feeding fishmeal and fish oil to ruminants;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.