

Brussels, 19 October 2010

## Commission favours temporary suspension of animal cloning for food production in the EU

*The European Commission has today announced that it will propose a temporary suspension of animal cloning for food production in the EU. The Commission also plans to suspend temporarily the use of cloned farm animals and the marketing of food from clones. All temporary measures will be reviewed after five years. The establishment of a traceability system for imports of reproductive materials for clones, such as semen and embryos of clones is also envisaged. The system will allow farmers and industry to set up database with the animals that would emerge from these reproductive materials.*

Commissioner in charge of Health and Consumer Policy, John Dalli, said: *"The Communication adopted today is a response to calls from the European Parliament and Member States to launch a specific EU policy on this sensitive issue. I believe that the temporary suspension constitutes a realistic and feasible solution to respond to the present welfare concerns".* The commissioner underlined that the proposal will not suspend cloning for uses other than food, such as research, conservation of endangered species or use of animals for the production of pharmaceuticals. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that *"with the adoption of this report, the Council, the Parliament and the Commission will move forward on the proposal on Novel Foods which is an important contribution to consumer protection and innovation".*

### The way forward

In the Commission's view, a selective mixture of measures, accompanied by a review clause after five years, is the best way forward to address the issue. These measures will sufficiently address **animal welfare concerns** without introducing unnecessary and unjustifiable restrictions.

### The Commission's assessment

The communication presents an **assessment of cloning technology** in relation to food production and examines the **relevant aspects of cloning in light of the existing legislative framework**. It acknowledges the challenges posed by animal welfare issues and takes into consideration the ethical facet of cloning. It also notes that **there is no scientific evidence confirming food safety concerns** regarding foods obtained from cloned animals or their offspring.

The communication examines **cloning both in the Member States and in third countries**. In the EU, the imports, trade and use of products from clones are currently covered by general EU legislation. Denmark is the only Member State that has imposed a national ban on the use of animal cloning for commercial purposes, while some third countries are already using cloning to produce breeding animals.

The Commission consulted stakeholders, asked EFSA to update scientific issues and took into account the opinion of the European Group of Ethics.

## **Background**

Cloning is the creation of an organism that is a genetic copy of another. This means the two organisms share exactly the same DNA.

The debate about cloning for food purposes started a few years ago when cloned embryos were imported into the EU. According to the current EU Regulation, **only food produced from clones is considered "novel food"** as it is not produced via traditional breeding techniques. Therefore, such food falls under the scope of the Regulation on Novel foods, which is now under discussion at EU level. Novel foods are foods and food ingredients that have not been significantly used for human consumption within the EU before 15 May 1997.

In September 2008, in a resolution it adopted, the European Parliament supported a total ban of cloning. In 2009, in order to have a broader view of the issue, the Council asked the Commission to present a report. At his EP's hearing earlier this year, Commissioner Dalli promised that the report would be delivered by the end of 2010.

**For more information, please visit:**

[http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa\\_locale-1178620753812\\_1211902019540.htm](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902019540.htm)