



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 20.3.2013  
C(2013) 1343 final

Dear President,

*The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the use of lactic acid to reduce microbiological surface contamination on bovine carcasses {COM(2012) 578 final}.*

*The Commission would like to underline that the possibility to approve the use of certain substances for surface decontamination of food of animal origin is provided in the EU food hygiene legislation {Regulation (EC) N° 853/2004}.*

*The Commission proposal on the use of lactic acid as a decontaminant is based on a thorough scientific risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) which evaluated the safety and efficacy of lactic acid. The EFSA delivered a favourable opinion recommending that the use of lactic acid as a decontaminant should be subject to certain conditions, for example regarding concentration and temperature. The Commission has taken these recommendations into account and proposed that lactic acid should only be used on bovine carcasses, half carcasses or quarters in slaughterhouses.*

*The Commission would like to underline that the use of lactic acid for surface decontamination is not a technological means to preserve final products, as is the case for example with the addition of lactic acid salts to pre-packed preparations of fresh meat, which is already authorised by European legislation. In this context the Commission would like to point out that the allowed residual values of lactic acid when such salts are used as food additives are up to 200 times higher compared to the residual amounts observed after surface decontamination treatment with lactic acid.*

*Finally, the Commission would like to stress that the use of lactic acid should not be considered as a substitute for good hygienic slaughtering practices and operating procedures. Rather, it should be integrated by food business operators into good hygienic practices and into systems which are already in place, based on hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP System). It should be considered as an additional tool to help reduce the contamination by most important pathogens, such as Verocytotoxin producing Escherichia coli (VTEC) and Salmonella.*

*The Commission hopes that these explanations serve to clarify the points raised by the Senat and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

Yours faithfully,

Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President

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