



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 12 September 2014

Animal Health: EU to tighten rules on horse passports

A Commission proposal to revise the rules for the identification of horses was endorsed yesterday by EU Member States' experts¹. This revised Regulation provides a more reliable and safer European system for the registration and identification of horses in the EU. One of the basic aims is to prevent the inadvertent or fraudulent slaughter for human consumption of horses which must be excluded from the food chain.

EU Commissioner in charge of Health, Tonio Borg said: "As promised, this is another lesson drawn from last year's horse meat fraud: the rules endorsed by the member States will strengthen the horse passport system in place. I believe that closer cooperation will enhance the safeguards which prevent non-food quality horse meat from ending up on our plates".

Main elements

With nearly 7 million equidae in Europe, the revised rules will require foals to be issued with a single passport having a unique identification number, before their first birthday. The passport also serves as a medical record and will serve the horse over its lifetime. All horses born after 1 July 2009 will need to be micro-chipped. Technical security features aimed at reducing the risk of falsified passports have also been put in place.

The introduction of a compulsory centralised database in all Member States will assist the competent authorities to better control the issuance of the passports by different passport issuing bodies. It will also substantially simplify, for the keepers, the procedures for updating the identification data in both the passport and the database of the issuing bodies.

Next steps

The Regulation will apply from 1 January 2016. However, EU countries not already having a centralised database will have until 1 July 2016 to put one in place.

Background

The rules for the identification of horses are laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 504/2008 of 6 June 2008, which is based on animal health and zootechnical legislation which allows for more than one passport-issuing body to be approved and supervised at national level.

EU veterinary medicine legislation lays down rules on the slaughter of horses for human consumption after medicinal treatment. Horses treated with bute or other medicines not

¹ Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health

authorised for food producing animals are prohibited from entering the food chain. If a horse receives a specific medicinal treatment with substances listed specifically for use in horses, a 6 month waiting period needs to be respected before that horse can be slaughtered for human consumption.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/identification/equine/index_en.htm

Follow us on Twitter: @EU_Consumer or @EU_Health

Contacts :

[Frédéric Vincent](#) (+32 2 298 71 66)

[Aikaterini Apostola](#) (+32 2 298 76 24)

For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [e-mail](#)