

**Contact: Pauline Constant +32 (0)2 789 24 01**  
**Date: 18/12/2013**  
**Reference: PR 2013/028**

## **Food from cloned animals: consumers left in the dark**

Despite European consumers having no appetite for food from cloned animals or their offspring, they might be eating it unawares. Today's European Commission proposals will not help obtain more information as they ignore food from clone offspring.

Currently, cloning for food production is not used in the European Union. However, imports - mainly meat - from the United States, Argentina and Brazil can come from clone offspring. Without effective labelling, European consumers have no knowledge of what their Argentinian steak or American beef is made of as traceability systems for cloned food do not exist in these countries.

After three years of weighing options, the EU has finally proposed measures to tackle cloning techniques in food production.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation, reacted:

"These measures are unfortunately a near duplicate of previous efforts which failed three years ago<sup>1</sup>, which leaves us at a standstill. The Commission had plenty of time to come up with a more ambitious proposal. The lack of progress is disheartening.

"The offspring of clones are off-limits to the proposal, which instead focuses on meat from clones themselves. No farmer would ever make meat out of a €15,000 clone. Cloned animals are instead used for reproduction purposes, not to end up on our plates.

"If Europe is to open the floodgates to meat from the offspring of clones, the least it can do is to allow consumers a choice by labelling such foods. An overwhelming 83% of consumers voiced their concerns and have said 'no' to steak and milk from clones and their offspring<sup>2</sup>. If consumers are opposed to cloning for food production, why is the debate still open?

"While talks over an EU-US trade deal are ongoing, the Commission chose to safeguard imports from the United States, where clone traceability is non-existent. We strongly urge the Commission to review their plans and reflect European consumers' wishes. Similarly, the Parliament and Council must send a reassuring signal."

ENDS

[1] Negotiations on a previous proposal on "Novel food" (including food from clones) stalled in 2011 between the Council and the Parliament. In a bid to help the Council and Parliament reach a compromise, the Commission had suggested in a 2010 report a temporary moratorium on cloning. This was rejected by the Council and Parliament, the latter calling for more ambitious measures. The Commission then promised to address the cloning issue in a dedicated piece of legislation, released today. The package contains two Directive proposals, one dealing with the cloning technique and the other with food from clones. While the latter is the most controversial, the Parliament will only be able to adopt or reject it.

[2] "Europeans' attitudes towards animal cloning", Flash Barometer 238, Oct. 2008.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/resources/docs/eurobarometer\\_cloning\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/resources/docs/eurobarometer_cloning_en.pdf)