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EUROPEAN LEGISLATION ON CERTAIN MARKETING STANDARDS FOR POULTRY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO WATERFOWL

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ABSTRACT

The authors refer about the European Legislation on marketing standards for poultry making particular references to the articles in force which regard the commerce of waterfowls.

The Economical European Community (EEC) is planning the general and mandatory rules regarding the safeguard of the consumer belonging to the EEC to reach a single market for all the Countries of the EEC in 1993. The healthiness, hygiene and earmark of the food products must be regulated to ensure to consumers a free and informed choice so that they can operate a correct choice in a really free market between the whole articles produced by each European Country.

To create a free market is necessary to approve common rules studied for the commerce. The common rules must prevent the approval of eventual National rules studied to safeguard local products. In particular, National rules cannot be approved against products bearing from other Countries of the same market but only particular registered trademarks can be created (f.e. "Label rouge" created in France state an open air technology of production of waterfowls and others poultry characterized by high meat quality). The aims to act common lows are by itself to go back to two fundamental aspects:

- the first aspect should assure an information to the EEC consumers. This information must be obtained at the moment the food (ducks or eggs) leave the poultry farm or the slaughtering house and must be based on the same rules all over the market;
- the second aspect should induce the producers to adopt similar technology for the production and marketing of the waterfowls.

A set of laws regarding the trade of poultry products has been approved in the EEC, starting by 1967. From 1967 several Commissions were set up by the EEC to discuss the different National situations. The EEC gave the Commissions the responsibility of according the different National requirements and of harmonising the different National mentalities. The aim of the work of the Commissions was to promote the quality of the products and to certify the objective quality of the products through labels. The label must furnish to the consumers all the informations regarding the characteristics of the product on sale in a clear and elementary form.

Following this process the EEC Council adopted the Regulation No. 1906/90 of 26 June 1990 ON CERTAIN MARKETING STANDARDS FOR POULTRY⁽⁸⁾ and the EEC Commission adopted the Regulation No. 1538/91 of 5 June 1991⁽⁹⁾ introducing detailed rules for implementing Regulation No. 1906/90. This pool of rules entered into force on July the first 1991. The healthy and sanitary rules^(1,3,6,7) and the label rules^(2,4,5) were not modified by this last pool of rules.

The first article of the Regulation of the Council lays down Community marketing standards for certain types and presentations of poultry meat. The following species

are ruled: *Gallus domesticus*, ducks, geese, turkeys and Guinea fowls. The Regulation shall not apply:

- when the poultry meat is exported or commercialized outside the Community,
- when the products, small quantities, are locally commercialized or from producer to consumer,
- when the dissection and removal of bones is carried out in the selling shops,
- when the products are sold to the alimentary industry for further transformations.

The first article of the rules of the Commission characterizes the poultry carcasses, the different cuts and the liver of geese and/or of ducks bearing to the following species: *Cairina moschata* (Cm) and Cm x *Anas platyrhynchos*. The following common names are so defined: Ducks = *Anas platyrhynchos dom.* or *Cairina moschata*, Geese = *Anser anser dom.* The following carcasses are so defined: (young) duck or duckling, (young) Muscovy duck and (young) goose or gosling = bird in which the tip of the sternum is flexible (not ossified); duck, Muscovy duck and goose = bird in which the tip of the sternum is rigid (ossified).

Furthermore, the Regulation No. 1538/91 ⁽⁹⁾ adds the following definitions for young goose or gosling and for goose. For young goose or gosling "the fat layer all over the carcass is thin or moderate; the fat of the young goose may have a colour indicative of a special diet" and for goose "a moderate to thick fat layer is present all over the carcass".

The second article of the Commission Regulation furnishes the explanations of the definitions employed in the second article of the Council Regulation regarding "poultry meat, carcass, cuts, prepackaged poultry meat, fresh poultry meat, frozen poultry meat, quick-frozen poultry meat and poultry meat without prepackaging".

The third article of the Council Regulation establishes that "poultry meat shall be classified as either class 'A' or class 'B' according to the conformation and appearance of the carcasses or cuts. Class 'A' shall be subdivided into A1 and A2 ... and this classification shall take account in particular of flesh development, the presence of fat, and the amount of damage and contusions". In the Commission Regulation this further classify is lost. The carcasses and the cuts are classified exclusively by the sixth article of the Commission Regulation in 'A' and 'B'. The sixth article acts that "poultry carcasses and cuts covered by the Regulation shall meet the following minimum requirements: intact, taking into account the presentation; clean, free from any visible foreign matter, dirt or blood; free of any foreign smell; free of visible bloodstains except those which are small and unobtrusive; free of protruding broken bones; free of severe contusions. In the case of fresh poultry, there shall be no traces of prior freezing". The same article furnishes the guide-lines to classify the carcasses and the cuts in the 'A' class. Consequently, under the condition of satisfying the culling minimum, everything cannot be classified in the 'A' class belong to the 'B' class.

Regarding the samples taken to control the respect of the classification, the seventh article of the Commission Regulation order that the whole of the batch must be checked. "A batch shall be made up of all poultry meat of the same type, the same class and the same production round or form the same slaughterhouse or cutting plant, situated in the same place, which are to be inspected".

The names under which the products are sold must agree with the names defined in the first article of the Commission Regulation. These names "may be supplemented by other terms provided that the latter do not mislead the consumer to a material degree and in particular such as would lead to confusion with other products" (see the third and the fourth article of the Commission Regulation) ⁽⁹⁾,

especially if additional indications regarding particular characteristics of respective types of farming are indicated.

The poultry carcasses shall be marketed fresh, frozen or quick-frozen; they shall be presented for sale partially eviscerated ('effilé' or 'roped'), eviscerated with giblets and eviscerated without giblets. The accompanying commercial documents must be in accordance with Directive 79/112/EEC (2).

Regarding the chilling methods of poultry meat, the EEC adopts the following methods: air chilling (chilling of poultry carcasses in cold air), air spray chilling (chilling of poultry carcasses in cold air interspersed with waterhaze or fine water spray) and immersion chilling (chilling of poultry carcasses in tanks of water or of ice and water). The seventh article of the Council Regulation rules that "the percentages of water absorption which are technically unavoidable and which shall not be exceeded during the preparation of fresh, frozen or quick-frozen carcasses shall be determined in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 17 of Regulation (EEC) No 2777/75 (6), as well as uniform methods of verifying compliance therewith". Besides, this article rules "the indication of the percentages of technically unavoidable water absorption may be made mandatory".

By issue of the Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1906/90 (8) and of the Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 1538/91 (9), the aim of the EEC was to prescribe certain marketing standards and common commercial rules for poultry meat to be adopted by all poultry producers. Under this view the poultry meat has been classified into commercial classes according to the conformation and appearance of the carcasses or cuts.

To regulate the trade presentations of poultry meat in exact market names is positive because these rules rationalize at level of each State member a production somewhat diversified. However, to restrict the new trade rules to morphological qualifications exposes to the risk that the best productions are not adequately rewarded. The restriction to morphological qualifications in fact cannot identify the quality meat level in an exhaustive way.

To examine carefully all parameters characterizing intrinsic and real quality of the product might offer to consumers the best informations on the real quality of the poultry meat. These parameters, cannot be detected by a simple visual control, should be objective parameters and should be linked to methods of chilling, to type of farming and, at least, to type of feeding.

REFERENCES

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- 6 - EEC Regulation 2777/75 (1975). O.J. of EEC. No L 282, 01.11.1975, p.77.
- 7 - EEC Regulation 1235/89 (1989). O.J. of EEC. No L 128, 11.05.1989, p.29.
- 8 - EEC Regulation 1906/90 (1990). O.J. of EEC. No L 173, 06.07.1990, p.1.
- 9 - EEC Regulation 1538/91 (1991). O.J. of EEC. No L 143, 07.06.1991, p.11.