

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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German Parliament against Cloning

Report Categories:

Biotechnology and Other New Production

Technologies

Agricultural Situation

Livestock and Products

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Report Highlights:

The German Parliaments has unanimously voted against the cloning of animals on May 8, 2015. The motion includes cloning of animals for food production and labeling of cloned animals, their offspring and products derived therefrom. With its motion, the German parliament challenges an EU proposal which prohibits cloning in food production but not the import of offspring of clones and their meat.

General Information:

The cloning of livestock should be banned - or at least the meat should be labeled. This is the call of the German Parliament in a unanimous decision. The parliament agreed on the joint motion on May 8, 2015.

The motion says that the cloning of animals using the technique of nuclear transfer is accompanied by significant risks. It includes burdens for the clones themselves and their surrogate mothers. Only a small percentage of the clones reach breeding age. Thus, a ban on the cloning of animals for food production and labeling of cloned animals, their offspring and products derived therefrom is necessary. This is based on moral and ethical considerations and it is in accordance with consumer and animal welfare associations and large parts of the population.

The motion states that product not only means food but also semen, ova, and embryo. Banning cloning for food production means that the European Union is supporting animal breeding and livestock production system which should be in accordance with animal welfare and public perception. On this basis, trade restrictions must be designed and justified within the framework of world trade law.

The motion of the German Parliament challenges the proposal of the EU -Commission. Although Brussels had proposed to prohibit cloning in food production, the EU proposal would still allow the import of offspring of clones in the EU and selling their meat without labeling.

Gitta Connemann, CDU member of the Parliaments agricultural committee, declared that “Consumers need to know if they does eat meat from cloned animals.” Against the background of the TTIP negotiations she called for compulsory labelling since such products could reach Europe.

Nicole Maisch, Green member of the agricultural committee welcomed the debate since it showed that the parliamentarians spoke for the majority of German people who reject cloned meat on their plates. She added that green genetic engineering and cloning are not the right way to secure affordable food for ten billion people in the future.

The association Testbiotech which is critical towards cloning and genetic engineering welcomed the motion of the Parliament. But, Testbiotech doubt its success, since TTIP restrict the room for maneuver of the Federal Government. Furthermore, the offspring of cloned cattle are already on the European market.

Background Information

The motion refers to the EU proposal for a directive about the cloning of cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and equidae (Council document 18152/13.) and the proposal for a directive concerning the placing on the market of foods from cloned animals (Council document 18153/13).