



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 21 February 2013

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**AGRI 103
VETER 12
DENLEG 14
SAN 62
CONSOM 27**

NOTE

from : Presidency
to : Council

Subject : Mislabelling of beef products

Delegations will find attached a note submitted by the Presidency, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 25 February 2013.

Mislabelling of beef products

The findings of laboratory tests, provided by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland to the Irish authorities on 14th January 2013, revealed the presence of non beef DNA in some beef products. Further investigation revealed a pan-European problem involving a range of meat products and traders/food business operators.

On 13th February, the Presidency held informal consultations with the Commissioner and a number of Member States directly affected by the findings. Following that meeting, the EU Standing Committee on Food and Animal Health (SCOFAH) met on 15th February to agree the detail of a pan European testing programme.

At the SCOFAH meeting, the Commission's proposals to test meat and meat products for the presence of horse DNA and to test for the presence of phenylbutazone (or bute) were agreed. Testing of meat and meat products will commence immediately and will be co-funded by the Commission at a rate of 75% for the first month. Results from the first round of tests, to be carried out by the end of March, must be reported to the Commission by 15th April. The number of DNA tests, which will be carried out on the basis of representative sampling, is expected to exceed 2,250 across the EU, and this will be supplemented by phenylbutazone testing on the basis of one sample per 50 tonnes of horsemeat. ***This testing will contribute to a clearer understanding of the situation across Europe and may be extended for a further two months.***

There is now a coordinated EU testing plan in place. In parallel, investigations in individual Member States continue and information is being shared between competent authorities and with Europol.

The Presidency wishes to draw the attention of the Council to these developments and to invite Ministers to consider whether further steps may be necessary at European level to comprehensively address this matter.