

Brussels, 14.04.2003 D/000731

Dear Dr. Lucas,

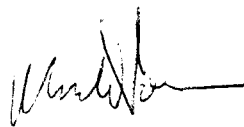
Thank you for your letter of 20 February 2003 concerning welfare of broiler chickens. I share the concerns expressed in your letter in relation to the welfare of broilers kept in intensive conditions. Indeed the welfare problems mentioned in your letter have been analysed in the opinion of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (SCAHAW) adopted in March 2000.

The scientists concluded that major welfare problems in the most intensive systems of farming occur in particular due to the fast growth rate of the chickens. As a consequence the management of the animals requires a high level of knowledge both in relation to the physiology of the animals and of the farming equipment in use.

Following the conclusions of the opinion from the SCAHAW the Commission is presently elaborating a specific proposal to establish the welfare requirements for the keeping of broilers in the European Union. In doing so the Commission is considering the improved standards for the training of all persons dealing with the chickens and an appropriate monitoring system to ensure that good management conditions are respected.

The Commission plans to adopt its proposal to improve the welfare of broilers later this year.

Yours sincerely,



David BYRNE

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