

**FRANZ FISCHLER**

MITGLIED DER EUROPÄISCHEN KOMMISSION

Brussels,

**- 7 -02- 2001**

**CAB - D/11192**

Dear Mrs Lucas,

Thank you for your letter of January 2001 concerning the export trade of live cattle from the European Union (EU) to third countries, in particular to the Middle East and North Africa, and the subsidies on these exports provided by the EU.

About your concern on the suffering of the animals in this trade, I would like to draw your attention to Commission Regulation (EC) n° 615/98 laying down specific detailed rules regarding the welfare during transport of live bovine animals exported benefiting from export refunds. This Regulation stipulates that the payment of export refunds for live bovine animals is subject to compliance, during the transport of the animal up to the first place of unloading in the country of final destination, with the welfare's provisions of Directive 91/628/EEC and Regulation (EC) n° 615/98.

This Regulation provides measures ensuring that an official veterinarian at the point of exit of the EU effects systematic checks on all consignments with regards to all aspects of the journey which can be possibly verified at this stage (fitness of the animals, means of transport complying with the provisions of the Directive 91/628/EEC and that provisions have been taken to feed and water the animals).

I enclose, for your information, a table which lists the amounts of export refunds that have been refused or recovered because of the non-observance of the provisions of Regulation (EC) N° 615/98. Notice that for the period 01/09/1998 – 30/06/2000 the payment of export refunds had been refused for 3150 animals.

Moreover, the Commission is carrying out an inquiry in several Member States with regards to the implementation of the provisions of Regulation (EC) n° 615/98.

About the ill treatment of the animals after arrival in the third countries of destination, for example Egypt, the Commission has no power to interfere in the way the animals are treated in third countries and in the way cattle is slaughtered within the own slaughtering facilities of these countries. However, it is worthwhile to refer to the conclusions adopted by the Agriculture Council of 20 and 21 November 2000 approving the Commissions proposal for the WTO negotiations on agriculture. In the proposal the Commission takes the firm view that in international trade animal welfare should become a matter of interest for all parties involved.

Mrs Caroline Lucas  
Member of the European Parliament  
Wiertz-Straat  
B-1047 Brussels

Finally it is important to underline that the level of export aid is calculated with great care and limited to what is strictly necessary. During the last year subsidies paid for cattle traded for slaughtering were reduced significantly from 60.50 euros/100 kg to 41.00 euros/100 kg. If it had not been for the recent outbreak of BSE in the EU, being the major crisis ever recorded in the sector, the efforts made to reduce export refund rates, including the ones for live cattle, would have resulted in an even greater reduction.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

<b>Application of Regulation (EC) N° 615/98 - Welfare of the bovine animals during transport. Export refunds</b>					
Amounts of the refunds refused or recovered for the period 01/09/1998 - 30/06/2000 as a result of the non-observance of the provisions of Regulation (EC) N° 615/98					
<b>Member State</b>	<b>Number of export declarations for which the refund had been withdrawn</b>	<b>Number of animals for which the refund had been withdrawn</b>	<b>Refused or recovered amounts of the refunds in national currency</b>	<b>Amounts in national currency in recovery procedure</b>	
B	-	-	-	-	-
DK	3	3	7 554 DKK	13 716 DKK	
D	48	1 647	1 248 644 DEM	1 070 825 DEM	
E	9	189	5 381 114 ESP	0	
EL	-	-	-	-	
F	54	846	1 909 524 FRF	175 077 FRF	
IRL	101	335	116 364 IEP	4 451 IEP	
I	18	61	32 437 439 ITL	0	
L	-	-	-	-	
NL	0	0	0	0	
A	9	78	462 383 ATS	-	
P	-	-	-	-	
FIN	-	-	-	-	
S	-	-	-	-	
U.K.	-	-	-	-	

General remarks: The 15 Member States answered the questionnaire of 6.07.00 of DG AGRI. 7 Member States stated that for the period under consideration, they did not carry out any payment of refunds for the export of live bovine animals (data pointed out by « - » in the table). 1 Member State answered that during the period under consideration, no irregularity concerning the application of Regulation (EC) N° 615/98 was noted (information pointed out by « 0 » in the table).