

Press release

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BIOTECH

Testbiotech e. V.
Institute for Independent
Impact Assessment in
Biotechnology

Meat from cloned animals – on the menu in Europe?

Testbiotech report warns market getting out of control

Munich / Brussels. Material from cloned animals and their offspring is likely to be on the European market already. There is currently no legal regulation which would effectively exclude these imports. No public register is available to provide transparency if cloned animals, their offspring or breeding material is imported into the EU.

Questions put to companies and relevant institutions by Testbiotech as to the current frequency and quantities of imports have not been answered. It is known that imports already began being made some years ago. Once imported, genetic material from cloned animals can spread quickly throughout livestock in Europe, removing choice for farmers and consumers.

“There is a high likelihood that consumers will be served products from cloned animals or their offspring without their knowledge,” says Christoph Then at Testbiotech. “There is no transparency for consumers and farmers.”

The study was written on behalf of Martin Häusling, Green member of the European Parliament. Its purpose is to assess the current state of safety, animal welfare and possible benefits. Major problems are evident in regard to animal welfare. As long as 15 years after the cloning of the sheep 'Dolly', the rate of success for cloning is still poor and unintended effects are not controllable. Many cloned animals suffer from heavily damaged organs, and most of the animals die. Furthermore, uncertainties regarding food safety cannot be ruled out for the moment.

As the report also shows, new dependencies can be caused by the introduction of cloned livestock, since the process for cloning and the animals derived are subject to patents. Cloning in kangaroos, wallabies, whales, dolphins, elephants, horses, giraffes, cows or bulls, sheep, camels, llamas, pigs and hippos is claimed as an invention.

The European Parliament has already voted for a ban on cloning farm animals and the products derived from it, while the Council of European Ministers is in favour of applying the Novel Food regulation. But as Testbiotech's report shows, the Novel Food legislation is not sufficient for solving the current problems in segregation and transparency.

The report is available for downloading at: <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/380>

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