

Question for written answer E-014920/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Renate Sommer (PPE)

Subject: Minimum liver weight versus fat content in foie gras production

Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 increased the minimum weight of duck and goose livers required for a product to be defined as foie gras. The establishment of higher minimum liver weights placed implicit pressure on producers to increase the use of gavage, and thus contradicted the Council of Europe recommendations of 22 June 1999 concerning Muscovy ducks and their hybrids, and the relevant 1998 report of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare.

Traditionally, there has not been a minimum weight of livers in foie gras production over the centuries.

- Does the Commission feel the need to have minimum liver weights for foie gras production, which at their present level are as recent as 2008 and therefore cannot be considered to be 'traditional'?
- Would a minimum level of fat content in the final product not be a viable alternative to minimum liver weights, thus facilitating the use of alternatives to force-feeding? If not, why not?
- If the Commission considers it essential for the legislation to retain a minimum liver weight, should it not commission studies aimed at establishing which maximum liver weights can be achieved without force-feeding, and adapt the legislation to the birds' physiology rather than promoting an artificial practice which is detrimental to their welfare?