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EU proposals for temporary ban on cloned food welcomed

An EFA press release by MEP Alyn Smith (SNP)

The European Commission has today (Tuesday) presented proposals on food production from cloned animals, including a proposal for a temporary five year ban.
The establishment of a traceability system for imports of reproductive materials for clones, such as semen and embryos of clones is also envisaged. The system will allow farmers and industry to set up a database with the animals that would emerge from these reproductive materials.
The European Commissioner underlined that the proposal will not suspend cloning for uses other than food, such as research, conservation of endangered species or use of animals for the production of pharmaceuticals.
All temporary measures will be reviewed after five years.
SNP MEP and member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, **Alyn Smith** said:
"This at least gives us all a bit of much needed clarity, and on balance I welcome the Commission's proposals on this: the suggested framework is realistic and deals with this sensitive issue without introducing unnecessary and unjustifiable restrictions, while still taking full account of present public concerns over welfare and progeny.
"The most crucial point for me is that this is a temporary, precautionary ban while this issue is thoroughly investigated in a calm and rational manner. While there has been no evidence of any possible risk to humans through food from cloned animals, it is only right that there is more investigation done into the science. However, to have altogether refused to allow greater research of this technology would have been daft - after all, it has been through scientific innovation that we have been able to increase yields and feed the burgeoning world population - and Scotland's biotech sector has been key in developing these technologies.
"My particular personal concern on this issue is the rapid impact that cloning could have on the animal gene pool, with potentially massive limiting effects in less than a decade. However, the commitment by the Commission to establish a traceability system for cloned animals should ensure that there is proper regulation and control of this technique, while more work can be done to properly assess its impact.
"This is a good, balanced proposal by the Commission, and I hope will reassure consumers and producers alike that this is being taken seriously."

Further information from the European Commission is available at:
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/501&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1349&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

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