



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 12 April 2012

8661/12

**AGRI 216
VETER 28**

NOTE

from :	Commission
to :	Council
Subject :	Update on compliance with the Directive 2008/120/EC in the Member States in view of the implementation of group housing of sows by 1 January 2013

Delegations will find attached an information note submitted by the Commission to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 26-27 April 2012.

INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION SERVICES

**ON THE "UPDATE ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE PIG DIRECTIVE IN THE
MEMBER STATES IN VIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP
HOUSING OF SOWS BY 1 JANUARY 2013"**

Council Directive 2008/120/EC on the protection of pigs requires that sows and gilts (immature female pigs) are kept in groups during approximately 2 months and a half of their pregnancy in all pig holdings keeping 10 sows or more from 1 January 2013. The requirement to keep sows in group was adopted in 2001 and provided a long enough transitional period for the pig sector to adapt.

Member States are primarily responsible for the implementation of Council Directive 2008/120/EC.

The Commission has informed Member States on the state of compliance with the Directive in several occasions, including during the meeting of the Chief Veterinary Officers on 26 March organised by the Council.

The Commission intends to recall to Member States the responsibility they have to ensure the proper implementation of group housing of sows by 1 January 2013 as foreseen by Council Directive 2008/120/EC.

In particular, due the continuous evolution of the situation, the Commission will present the current state of implementation of group housing of sows across the EU, based on the data received by Member States; the provisions of the Member States for the future state of implementation by 31 December 2012 will also be presented.

The Commission intends to firmly highlight to Member States the importance to urgently take all the necessary measures to ensure compliance with Council Directive 2008/120/EC and to continue providing transparent and harmonized data on the implementation of group housing of sows.

The implementation of group housing of sows by 1 January 2013 in all Member States is considered essential to avoid important distortions of competition and to avoid the loss of confidence by EU consumers.

Better enforcement of the existing EU welfare legislation is one of the main objective of the EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015.

The Commission informs Member States that it intends to open infringement proceedings against Member States which will not be in compliance with the Directive on the protection of pigs by 1 January 2013.

