

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda item 4.8

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-fifth Session

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Comments from BEUC concerning CAC 45th session agenda item 4.8

Concerns: Agenda item 4.8 of the 45th CAC session – Discussions on zilpaterol hydrochloride

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

Introduction

The European Consumer Organisation, BEUC, wishes to submit the following comments for consideration by delegates at the 45th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) in relation to agenda item 4.8 concerning the work from the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF) – and specifically the growth promoter zilpaterol hydrochloride.

General comments

Zilpaterol is a growth promoter, the use of which has been banned in the European Union for over two decades.¹ This ban applies to domestic production and imports of meat of animals treated with this substance for growth promotion purposes alike.

Antibiotic, hormone and steroid residues have consistently topped the list of food safety-related concerns among European consumers. The latest pan-European survey on food safety found that the presence of residues of these substances in food is the second biggest food safety-related concern for EU citizens (after pesticide residues in food).²

In addition, concerns have been raised regarding animal health and welfare issues potentially associated with the use of zilpaterol in cattle. More than nine in ten EU citizens believe it is important to protect the welfare of farmed animals (94%), according to an EU-wide survey.³ The welfare of farmed animals is also a cornerstone of sustainable food production and food systems in a One Health approach.

For the above reasons, the EU's current approach to regulating the use of growth promoters, including zilpaterol, in farmed animals is widely supported by European consumers. BEUC, therefore, has strong reservations about the establishment by Codex Alimentarius of MRLs for zilpaterol and would instead support the discontinuation of Codex Alimentarius' work on this substance.

We thank you for considering our comments.

Yours faithfully,

¹ Council Directive 96/22/EC of 29 April 1996 concerning the prohibition on the use in livestock of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action and of beta-agonists, and repealing Directives 81/602/EEC, 88/146/EEC and 88/299/EEC, with subsequent amendments. OJ L 125, 23.5.1996, p. 3–9.

² https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-09/EB97.2-food-safety-in-the-EU_report.pdf

³ <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2096>

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