

Message 001

Communication from the Commission - TRIS/(2026) 1669

Directive (EU) 2015/1535

Notification: 2026/0313/IT

Notification of a draft text from a Member State

Notification – Notification – Notifizierung – Нотификация – Oznámení – Notifikation – Γνωστοποίηση – Notificación – Teavitamine – Ilmoitus – Obavijest – Bejelentés – Notifica – Pranešimas – Paziņojums – Notifika – Kennisgeving – Zawiadomienie – Notificação – Notificare – Oznámenie – Obvestilo – Anmälan – Fógra a thabhairt

Does not open the delays - N'ouvre pas de délai - Kein Fristbeginn - Не се предвижда период на прекъсване - Nezahajuje prodlení - Fristerne indledes ikke - Καμμία έναρξη προθεσμίας - No abre el plazo - Viivituste perioodi ei avata - Määräaika ei ala tästä - Ne otvara razdoblje kašnjenja - Nem nyitja meg a késésekét - Non fa decorrere la mora - Atidėjimai nepradedami - Atlikšanas laikposms nesākas - Ma jiftaħ il-perjodi ta' dewmien - Geen termijnbegin - Nie otwiera opóźnień - Não inicia o prazo - Nu deschide perioadele de stagnare - Nezačína oneskorenia - Ne uvaja zamud - Inleder ingen frist - Ní osclaíonn sé na moilleanna

MSG: 20261669.EN

1. MSG 001 IND 2026 0313 IT EN 24-06-2026 IT NOTIF

2. Italy

3A. Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy

Dipartimento Mercato e Tutela Direzione Generale Consumatori e Mercato

Divisione II. Normativa tecnica - Sicurezza e conformità dei prodotti, qualità prodotti e servizi

00187 Roma - Via Molise, 2

3B. Ministero dell'agricoltura, della sovranità alimentare e delle foreste

Direzione generale dello sviluppo rurale

DISR VII - Valorizzazione biodiversità animale

Via XX Settembre, 20 - 00187 Roma

4. 2026/0313/IT - C60A - Labelling

5. Regulations governing the 'National Quality System for Animal Welfare – SQNBA' pursuant to Article 224 bis of Decree-Law No. 34 of 19 May 2020, and operational procedures for the management and approval of certification requirements (specifications) for fattening pigs...

6. It regulates SQNBA certification, sets out animal health and welfare requirements that are higher than EU and national standards for the certification of cattle and pigs farmed outdoors, and lays down marketing rules for certified animals and products.

7.

8. The National Quality System for Animal Welfare (hereinafter SQNBA) is a certification scheme for livestock farms and the animal products derived from them, for animal welfare, established pursuant to Article 224-bis of Decree-Law No. 34 of 19 May 2020, introduced by Conversion Law No. 77 of 17 July 2020 (<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2020/07/18/20A03914/sg>)

The system is the result of the collaboration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF), the Ministry of Health and Accredia (the Italian Accreditation Authority) and aims to define a basic national production scheme, with the aim of improving the sustainability of production processes and transparency in relation to consumers.

The proposed technical regulation (Articles 1 to 11) sets out the procedure for defining the animal health and welfare requirements, that are higher than those laid down in EU and national law, for the qualification of the management of the breeding process intended for food production. Furthermore, it clarifies that participation in the SQNBA is voluntary and the right of access is guaranteed for all operators in the Member States of the European Union legitimately concerned. It also regulates the issuing of the certification of compliance with the SQNBA requirements, as well as the procedures and methods by which persons belonging to the production chain concerned may market animals from a certified herd or the product of animal origin.

Meanwhile, Article 12 specifies that, upon a proposal from the Technical and Scientific Committee for Animal Welfare (CTSBA) as provided for in Article 10 of the decree, the certification requirements (specifications) relating to the bovine species and the porcine species for fattening that are farmed outdoors are defined, the texts of which are set out in Annex 3.

Finally, Article 13 of the proposal provides for the simultaneous repeal of the previous national legislation on the SQNBA.

9. The SQNBA aims to establish a national framework to improve the sustainability of production processes and enhance transparency for consumers.

The draft has been resubmitted to take account of the withdrawal announced in message no. 009 of 22 April 2026 (notification 2026/0075/IT), in which the Commission considers it necessary to repeal the previous SQNBA regulations and replace them with a new draft.

The proposal, in repealing the previous national legislation, covers both the procedure for defining animal health and welfare requirements, which are higher than those laid down in relevant European and national standards, aimed at regulating the management of the rearing process for animals intended for food production, and the certification requirements (specifications) relating to the bovine species and the porcine species for fattening that are farmed outdoors. Membership of the SQNBA is voluntary, and the right of access is guaranteed for all operators in the European Union legitimately concerned (Article 1, paragraph 1). It also regulates the issuing of the certification of compliance with the SQNBA requirements, as well as the procedures and methods by which various persons may market animals from a certified herd or the product of animal origin.

The results of the 2016 and 20213 Eurobarometer surveys highlight a growing concern amongst Italian and European citizens regarding animal welfare and the reduction in the use of antibiotics in livestock farming.

This interest suggests an increase in labelling initiatives aimed at providing transparent information on these issues. This trend is confirmed by the European Commission's 'Study on Animal Welfare Labelling – Final Report', which found strong demand for information on animal husbandry conditions, particularly regarding freedom of movement, housing arrangements, access to the outdoors and slaughter practices. The study also highlights that consumers are interested in labelling schemes that certify high standards of animal welfare, particularly during the rearing and slaughter stages.

The survey carried out in 2022 by AISA–Federchimica² also confirms the importance Italians attach to animal welfare. Over 80% of respondents believe that product quality depends on the quality of animal husbandry, whilst almost half consider it necessary to further improve animal living conditions. Among the main measures identified are reducing antibiotic use, improving animal health monitoring, and reducing stocking densities on farms. The majority of respondents also stated that they would be willing to pay more for products produced in accordance with animal welfare standards, recognising the central role played by farmers and vets in promoting more sustainable and responsible production systems.

Consequently, the draft technical regulation not only promotes animal welfare on farms in general, but also ensures that an ever-growing number of consumers can find certified products on the market from farms where animal welfare exceeds mandatory standards.

9a. - What is the risk to the legitimate public interest objective that the notified measure aims to address?

The draft technical regulation aims to give greater impetus to the new European strategies to achieve, as soon as possible, the objectives set to improve animal welfare and combat antimicrobial resistance. In this regard, the new European strategies aim to reward farms that are genuinely committed to improving the health and welfare of farmed animals and to limiting the use of antimicrobials on farms. These farms can benefit from incentives to accelerate the achievement of these objectives and, through the provisions of the proposed SQNBA technical regulation, provide end consumers with visibility of products that meet above-average levels of animal welfare and other standards.

How does the measure contribute to achieving the stated objective?

The SQNBA, in fact, covers requirements and procedures relating to the management of the rearing phase, animal health and welfare, in the knowledge that having a positive impact on these aspects affects the associated costs, animal productivity, the use of medicines, antimicrobial resistance, as well as the reduction of emissions on farms – aspects that are now essential for agricultural sustainability. The certification subsequently obtained will enable participating operators to use specific information designed to distinguish the marketing and labelling of animals and products originating from the same quality system.

- Is the public interest objective pursued consistently and systematically, and if so, how?

The SQNBA is a 'voluntary certification' scheme which will see stakeholders voluntarily adhere to specific codes of practice setting out the certification requirements. The incentives provided for in the CAP Strategic Plan will encourage participation in the SQNBA, and the growing demand for products from farms committed to ensuring higher standards of animal welfare will enable the set objectives to be achieved.

9b. What is the scope of the restriction on the internal market introduced by the notified draft measure? How will this measure affect cross-border trade and services? The draft technical regulation will not entail any

restriction on the market. The marketing in Italy of products obtained under other certified animal welfare quality schemes and originating from other Member States does not impose any prohibition, nor does it hinder or restrict the free movement of foodstuffs, in accordance with Article 38 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers. Among other things, Article 38(2) allows, within the options provided for in Article 39 below, the possibility of national provisions to regulate matters not specifically harmonised. Therefore, the proposed technical regulation in no way precludes the possibility of marketing in Italy products labelled in accordance with certified animal welfare quality schemes, provided that they are produced in accordance with technical regulations approved by the Member States of origin and are intended for the end consumer in Italy. In the event that these products are relabelled in Italy, the Italian operator must adhere to and operate according to the specifications of the country of origin of the products, for the applicable stages of the chain that will take place in Italy. Finally, it should be noted that Article 3(2) of the draft provides for the adaptation of procedures only for technical standards already recognised or authorised by MASAF, or for voluntary certifications issued by certification bodies operating exclusively in Italy, that contain information on animal well-being, biosecurity on farms, and veterinary medicinal products. The aforementioned Article 3, therefore, is in no way directed at other quality schemes relating to animal welfare that have been lawfully established in other Member States. – Why are the existing specific or general rules (for example, legislation on product safety or consumer protection) insufficient to safeguard the public interest objective or objectives being pursued? Is the measure set out in the notified draft the least restrictive measure, or are there less restrictive measures in terms of its impact on the internal market? Furthermore, the proposal in question constitutes a single reference framework for voluntary animal welfare certification, based on the assessment of scientific parameters, and aims to bring order to the various certification protocols currently in place, thereby contributing to clearer information for consumers. Furthermore, there is no EU-level legislation regulating animal welfare labelling, despite several proposals in this regard. What less restrictive alternatives have been considered? The proposal aims to establish a higher standard of welfare than that required by mandatory legislation and also provides for the phased introduction of certain requirements. It represents a first step towards enabling a decisive move towards farms that adopt more stringent welfare standards. The alternative is the 'zero' option; therefore, there are no alternatives. Why have these alternatives been ruled out?

This is a first-stage intervention that allows for the medium-term assessment of introducing further requirements. Why does the chosen measure represent the least restrictive way of achieving the objective? Because it is a first-stage intervention that introduces requirements that a wide range of farmers are expected to comply with, whilst raising animal welfare standards and setting in motion a positive cycle that can continue to grow.

9c. Does the measure impose the restrictions proportionate to the importance of the public interest objective pursued or, where applicable, to the severity of the risk and the likelihood of it occurring?

It is considered that certification with more stringent requirements is proportionate to the importance of the public interest objective pursued. Participation is voluntary.

- Has the protection of the public interest that the measure was intended to ensure been assessed in the light of the degree of interference caused to the functioning of the internal market? Why did the authorities conclude that the protection of the public interest took precedence over the creation of a barrier to the internal market?

Given the nature of the measure, it does not create any internal interference; on the contrary, it aims to improve animal welfare and allow specific labelling of the products obtained, without prejudicing the products

of those who choose not to adhere to the SQNBA.

- How serious is the failure to serve the public interest compared to the potential harm caused by the restriction?

It is considered that the benefits to be gained will be significant and that this will not harm the current marketing system, which remains in force.

10. References to basic texts: No basic text(s) available

11. No

12.

13. No

14. No

15. No

16.

TBT aspects: No

SPS aspects: No

European Commission

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