BBC NEWS

# EU to look at cloned meat safety

**Europe's food watchdog is to assess whether meat and dairy products from cloned animals are safe to eat.**

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was asked by the European Commission to look into the future impacts of livestock cloning.

At present, there is no specific regulation on food products from cloned animals for consumption in the EU.

Last year, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) concluded that products from cloned animals were safe.

It has put that draft ruling out for consultation, but it is widely expected that the FDA will give the go-ahead to the sale of food products made through animal cloning later this year.

**Entering food chain**

In the light of this, the European Commission wrote to the EFSA, asking them "to advise on food safety, animal health, animal welfare and environmental implications of cloned animals... their offspring, and of products obtained from these animals".

It added: "According to experts, animal cloning... is on the verge of widespread commercial use and expected to spread within the global food chain before 2010.

"Food derived, in particular from traditionally produced offspring of cloned animals, might therefore be available to consumers in the future."

The EFSA has said its scientific committee will lead the research. The commission has asked for the watchdog to provide its scientific conclusions within the next six months.

It has also asked the European Group of Ethics to look into the ethics of cloning.

Commercial cloning is already an issue for some European countries; a calf grown from an embryo taken from a cloned cow was recently born on a British farm.

At the time, the UK's environment department said no health and welfare rules had been broken, but its food watchdog said more discussions were needed to assess legal requirements relating to offspring of cloned animals.

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