REGULATION

EUROPEAN STEROID BAN SPARKS CONTROVERSY

LONDON—Fall-out is beginning from the European Parliament's highly controversial decision to outlaw the use of steroid hormones in animal husbandry (see *Bio/Technology* 4:255, April '86). This ruling led the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC) in Brussels to release a directive imposing a comprehensive ban on all such substances. As announced earlier this year by U.K. Agriculture Minister Michael Jopling, however, Britain is now challenging this action before the European Court of Justice. Answering a question in the House of Commons from Labour Member of Parliament (MP) Tam Dalyell, Jopling spoke of a "lack of regard for relevant scientific evidence" when European MPs considered that matter last year.

Nevertheless, detection methods are considered urgently necessary in case the U.K. appeal fails and the ban comes into effect as planned over the next two years. Having issued their instructions in response to the wishes of the European parliament, EEC administrators concede that some meat producers will continue to use the

proscribed additives. Hence the demand for simple but specific tests which meat inspectors can use in the abattoir. To this end, the Laboratory of the Government Chemist has awarded £42,000 to Nigel Jenkins and Frank Burnet of the University of Kent to develop monoclonal antibody-based kits to detect growth-promoting steroids in meat.

Ironically, the consumer campaign which led to the steroid hormone ban was triggered by an incident six years ago in which diethylstilboestrol was imported illegally into France, was injected illicitly into veal calves, and eventually appeared in canned baby food in Italy. While insisting that there is no evidence of hazard from the use of approved steroids in animal husbandry, opponents of the EEC decision continue to attack the illogicality of action against one group of substances on the basis of dangers from something quite different—a substance, in fact, which was already the subject of a legal ban.

Eric Lamming, chairman of the scientific committee whose advice was rejected by the European Parliament,

pointed out recently that abuses of hormones have occurred only in countries where their use has been prohibited (*The Veterinary Record* 118:523, 1986). "The EEC ban will actually encourage further abuses," he said. "Moreover, the hormone issue and its wider implications in relation to future action on the use of veterinary drugs generally is not just a question for the EEC. The decision to ban steroid hormones in Europe is reverberating around the world and will generate a knock-on effect."

But Lamming stressed that he believes these effects will not be permanent, because sooner or later the ban will be seen as untenable. "Clearly, it is the responsibility of members of the European Parliament to legislate. But having assumed the responsibility of legislation, it is the duty of politicians to ensure that they are adequately briefed and fully supported by the best scientific brains available. Otherwise the EEC will continue to generate directives which, like this one, have a limited life because they are intrinsically inadequate."

—Bernard Dixon

•2-D/1-D •1-D •DNA & IMAGE ANALYSIS ZEINER SOFT LASER SCANNING DENSITOMETERS

Quantitation, Contour & Pictorial Mapping
Superimposition and Autostep-over for 1-50 lanes of 1-D separation
3 microns resolution in X, 10 microns in Y axis

RIBBON LASER BEAM (up to 20mm long - 3 microns thin) or spot 3 microns diameter. TUNGSTEN and UV. Silver, coomassie hue or any stain. Fluorescence, reflectance, transmission and transmittance

FOR SCANNING: 2-D or 1-D slab gels, X-Ray films, TLC plates and tubes, blots. Maximum scan area 450mm x 450mm. Automatic adjustable step-over. Micro Elisa, Micro Dots on Nitro cellulose.

STAND-ALONE SYSTEM: Friendly with Apple, HP, IBM. Independent if computer breaks. Programs available.

Prices: 2-D: \$12,995 & up 1-D: \$1,895 & up

1-D Complete System (Laser scanner, computer, disk drive, monitor, printer) \$6,990

Call Collect: Dr. Zeiner (714) 870-0290, telex 692430

BIOMED INSTRUMENTS INC.

1020 South Raymond Avenue, #B, Fullerton, California 92631, U.S.A. Tlx 692430

CALBIOCHEM Brand Biochemicals

Announces
The most complete line
of Calcium Reagents
currently available
anywhere...

Monitor: QUIN 2/AM
FURA 2/AM
INDO 1/AM
TPEN

Mobilize: Ionomycin
A23187

Mediate: Calmodulin
(Antisera to Calmodulin
also available)
OAG
IP₃
TMB-8

For more information about this comprehensive line of high-quality products, please call (800) 854-9256.

Behring Diagnostics

Division of American Hoechst Corporation
10933 North Torrey Pines Road • La Jolla, CA 92037
(619) 450-9600; (800) 854-9256

BEHRING®
A. Behring

Write in No. 138 on Reader Service Card

Write in No. 165 on Reader Service Card