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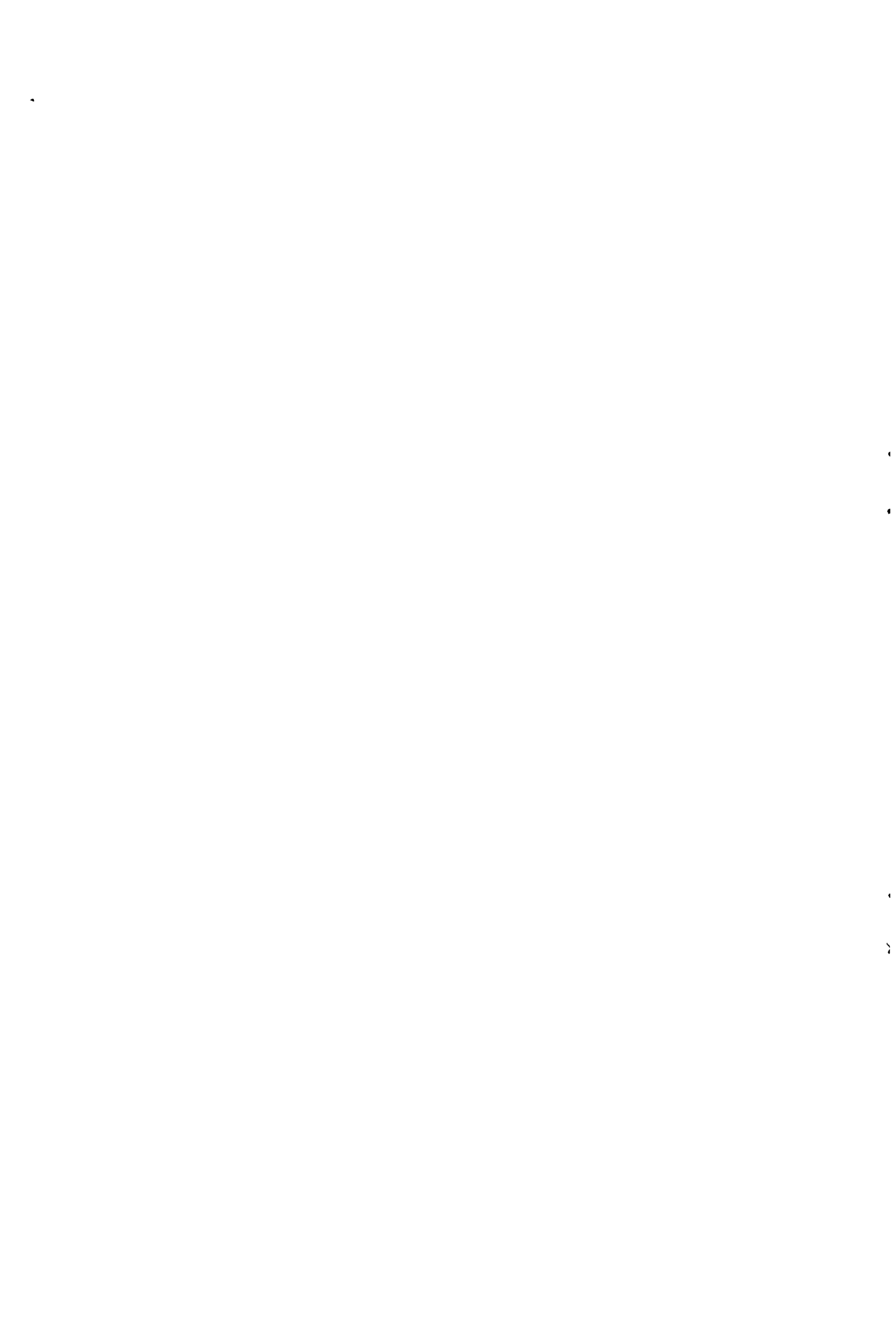
DOCUMENT 1-686/82

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public
Health and Consumer Protection

on ~~goose~~-cramming to produce foie gras

Rapporteur: Mrs PRUVOT



On 15 October 1980 the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr CABORN (Doc. 1-486/80) pursuant to Rule 47 (ex 25) of the Rules of Procedure on goose-cramming to produce foie gras was referred to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection.

On 19 March 1981, the committee appointed Mr COMBE, rapporteur. Following the death of Mr COMBE, a new rapporteur had to be appointed.

On 27 April 1982 the committee appointed Mrs PRUVOT rapporteur.

It considered the motion for a resolution at its meetings of 22 June 1982 and 30 September 1982 and, at the latter meeting adopted the motion for a resolution contained in the report unanimously with three abstentions.

The following took part in the vote : Mr Collins, chairman; Mrs Pruvot, rapporteur; Mr Calvez (deputizing for Mr Nordmann), Mr Del Duca, Mr Forth, Mr Ghergo, Mr Geurtsen (deputizing for Mrs Scrivener), Mrs Lentz-Cornette, Mr Muntingh, Mrs Seibel-Emmerling, Dr Sherlock and Mrs Spaak.

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on goose cramming to produce foie gras

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the resolution tabled by Mr Caborn (Doc.1-486/80),
 - B. having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc.1-686/82),
 - C. whereas the practice of goose-cramming to increase the size of goose livers to produce foie gras is used in certain regions of the Community, particularly in France,
 - D. whereas cramming is not an industrial process but is carried out by an experienced person who helps the animal by hand to swallow the exclusively maize-based food,
1. Deplores cruelty to animals, whatever form it may take and recalls the findings published in January 1974 of the inquiry carried out under the auspices of the Council of Europe by a committee for the protection of animals;
 2. Recognizes, nevertheless, that the different traditions and cultures of the Member States give rise to differences in attitude as to what constitutes acceptable behaviour;
 3. Considers, therefore, that there is no reason to restrict or prohibit the cramming of geese to produce foie gras;
 4. Fails to see any urgent need for harmonization in this area within the Community at present.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The goose is certainly the fowl which has been longest domesticated by man. There are indications that it was kept in ancient China and India, by the Persians and the Assyrians and by all the peoples of the ancient world.
2. The Egyptians were the first to leave irrefutable documentary evidence of goose-fattening. In Sakkarah, at the burial place of Ti, a high official of the Royal Court during the Vth Dynasty (c. 2500 B.C.), a large mural was discovered which shows several groups of geese being fed by six people seated in the foreground.
3. The goose was originally a migrant bird which stored reserves of fat all over its body, particularly around the liver, before embarking on its long migration. If one observes a goose in flight, it can be seen that the liver is situated at the animal's centre of gravity.
4. The goose belongs to the family of fat palmipeds with a natural bulimia which is exploited during the cramming process.
5. Cramming is divided essentially into two stages:
 - . a period of pre-cramming which takes account of the anatomical features of the animal (developed oesophagus and crop),
 - . the period of cramming itself which varies, depending on the animal, from 8 to 20 days on average.
6. Cramming is essentially an artisanal occupation carried out by a person who exercises care and attention in helping the animal by hand to swallow exclusively maize-based food. A goose receives between 700 and 800 grams of food per day in this way. The aim is to exploit the natural bulimic appetite of the animal to assure rapid fattening.

7. The geese will approach the person who feeds them and demand food. If the cramming process caused any suffering to the animal it would certainly not react in this way at the sight of the person responsible for feeding it.

8. Before the cramming period the geese live in total freedom. During the cramming period the animals are kept in spacious and airy enclosures with fences no higher than 70 cm.

9. The liver of the crammed animal does not show any pathological abnormality. There is no liver disease. If the cramming is stopped, the liver becomes normal again. The health of the goose is a precondition for the success of cramming.

10. The Council of Europe report of 14 January 1974, drawn up in France by a committee of experts on the protection of animals, describes exactly all the goose-cramming procedures. After watching cramming in progress and visiting a number of farms, the committee did not indicate any inhumane or unacceptable practices in the rearing of the animals. There is no reason to doubt the results of the inquiry by the Council of Europe.

11. In France, the production of foie gras helps to provide a living for around 20,000 small farms situated in poor agricultural regions.

12. While France is a major producer of foie gras, other countries, such as Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Israel, also produce significant quantities. Many countries, such as Japan, Spain, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil are currently showing an interest in this production.

13. In view of the fact that the Council of Europe's committee of experts on the protection of animals did not find any cause to object to the production of foie gras by goose-cramming, that, viewed objectively, cramming is a process whereby the animal's natural inclination to bulimia is exploited, and that the animal is not diseased after cramming, there is no reason to restrict or prohibit production.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-486/80)

tabled by Mr Richard CABORN pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on goose cramming to produce foie gras

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the provisions of the Treaty of Rome and in particular Article 39 and following and Article 100 and following,
 - having regard to the ban on force feeding in the animal protection legislation of certain European countries,
 - having regard to the Memorandum on this subject by the 'Crusade against all Cruelty to Animals',
 - whereas goose cramming exploits the animals beyond their natural limits,
 - whereas the report drawn up on goose cramming by the Council of Europe is at variance with established facts,
1. Believes goose cramming to be an inhumane and unacceptable method of animal husbandry;
 2. Requests the Commission to present to the European Parliament before the end of 1980 a detailed report on the process followed to produce foie gras in the Community and countries exporting to the Community, and calls for a report on the subject from its appropriate Committee;
 3. Invites the Commission to draw up regulations to control or eliminate the production of foie gras by goose cramming, and, as an interim measure, to permit national legislation to control trade in these products.