

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004873/25
to the Commission
Gerald Hauser (P/E)
(9 December 2025)

Subject: Investigation in Brazil reveals hormones and antibiotics in meat

European standards for veterinary medicinal products, food safety and traceability are among the strictest in the world. However, it is precisely these high standards that are coming under pressure as shown by new investigations in Brazil and reported by *agrarheute.com* on 4 December 2025. Prescription-only antibiotics and even hormones banned in the EU, such as oestradiol, are sold freely through the local farm supplies trade — without requiring a prescription, proof of identity or any documentation. Usage on Brazilian cattle farms is also problematic: feed dispensers administer antibiotics such as monensin, which has been banned in the EU since 2006. In addition, missing barcodes and the inadequate recording of sales of medicines show that control and follow-up systems are unsatisfactory. An EU audit had previously confirmed that Brazil does not reliably ensure that hormone-treated meat does not enter the EU.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the current findings in Brazil to the effect that prescription-only antibiotics and hormones banned in the EU are freely available, and what conclusions does it draw for food safety in the EU?
2. What is the Commission's assessment of Brazil's existing control and traceability systems, in light of the significant shortcomings identified by both journalists and an EU audit?
3. Under these circumstances, does the Commission consider the EU-Mercosur agreement to be compatible with EU agricultural, environmental and consumer protection standards, or are additional safeguards needed?

Submitted: 9.12.2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(23 February 2026)

The food imported from third countries must comply with the same sanitary requirements as food produced in the EU. Those standards remain consistent across all trade agreements and are neither lowered nor negotiable in the context of any agreements with third countries, including with Mercosur.

While not imposing on third countries its rules on prescriptions of antibiotics, the EU however requires exporters to ensure that animal products, such as meat, destined for the EU market, comply with the maximum residue levels set for pharmacologically active substances such as antimicrobials ⁽¹⁾.

As the EU, Brazil does not allow the use of hormones for growth promotion. However, as it allows the use of 17beta-oestradiol for reproductive purposes, the EU requires ⁽²⁾ a segregated production system to be in place in Brazil to ensure that only products from animals that have never been treated with 17beta-oestradiol are exported to the EU.

Brazil's existing control and traceability systems are subject to regular audits by the Commission, with reports published on the Internet ⁽³⁾. This approach is followed for imports from all third countries.

When during those audits non-compliances are identified, the competent authority is requested to take actions to align its systems with strict EU requirements. The effectiveness of these actions is followed up by the Commission.

Over the last two years, the Commission carried out nine audits in Mercosur in the agri-food area (food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, and plant health).

The Commission's close oversight of Mercosur will continue in 2026, with six on-site audits currently planned, two of which in Brazil.

⁽¹⁾ Article 6 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2292 of 6 September 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to requirements for the entry into the Union of consignments of food-producing animals and certain goods intended for human consumption, *OJ L 304*, 24.11.2022, pp. 1-30.

⁽²⁾ Article 10 of the above referred Regulation.

⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report>.