

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 2011-09-30

GAIN Report Number: E60052

EU-27

Post: Brussels USEU

EU Policy Update (issue 27)

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

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General Information:

EU Weekly Roundup and Policy Update is a digest of European agricultural issues. The topics covered in this report are intended to help inform U.S. government policy officials of European regional, national and international developments as they unfold. We include breaking news provided by FAS colleagues posted in EU member state countries, and also provide links to more detailed reports and web sites.

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New EU Food Labeling Rules Adopted: On September 29, the Council formally adopted the compromise deal on the Food Information to Consumers proposal that was negotiated between the European Parliament (EP) and the Council earlier this year. The new regulation is expected to be published in the EU's Official Journal by the end of November. The new rules will become applicable three years after their publication in the Official Journal except for the mandatory nutrition declaration which becomes applicable five years after the regulation has been published.

- **Nutrition declaration** becomes mandatory: energy value and the amounts of fat, saturates, carbohydrates, protein, sugars and salt (expressed as "salt" NOT "sodium") must be indicated, in tabular form, in the same field of vision per 100g or per 100ml and may also be expressed per portion. The most important elements of the nutrition information, including Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) may be repeated, on a voluntary basis, in the principal field of vision.
- **Country of Origin Labeling (COOL):** currently mandatory for fresh beef, fruits and vegetables, honey and olive oil will become mandatory for fresh pork, lamb and poultry. The Commission must adopt implementing rules for COOL of fresh meat within two years of the entry into force of the new regulation. Impact assessments will examine the possible extension of COOL to meat as an ingredient (within 2 years of the entry into force of the new regulation) and milk, milk used as an ingredient, unprocessed foods, single-ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food (within 3 years on the entry into force of the new regulation).
- **Minimum font size:** 1.2mm for the mandatory information on food labels as a general rule, for smaller packages the minimum font size is reduced to 0.9mm.
- **Allergen labeling:** allergenic substances must be highlighted in the list of ingredients.
- **Vegetable oils:** may be grouped together in the ingredients list under the designation "vegetable oils" but the specific vegetable sources must be indicated "e.g. "palmoil").
- **Trans fats:** within 3 years after the entry into force of the new regulation the Commission will evaluate the presence of trans fats in food and may come forward with a legislative proposal that could include

specific labeling requirements and restrictions on the use of trans fats.

- **Alcoholic beverages:** beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume of alcohol are exempted. Within 3 years after the entry into force of the new regulation, the Commission must evaluate whether the new rules should be extended to alcoholic beverages.

UK eyes intelligence and fee-led food and feed import safety overhaul: (Posted by London) The UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA) reports that it has been active in the early stages of the Commission discussion process regarding the future financing of official controls in the food and feed sector (Regulation 882/2004). The UK is hoping to exert early influence and secure alignment of future EU changes in this arena to a set of principles that they drew up earlier this year (<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/board/fsa110105.pdf>). These principles include more emphasis on analysis, intelligence and information provision to help target imported food and feed controls, and the need to establish a fee system that is simple, based on actual costs (allowing for full cost recovery) and linked to compliance. The UK's latest import strategy focuses on non-EU imports (one-third of total imports), and animal feed in particular. An EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) mission in 2009 and recent audits by FSA revealed significant shortcomings in feed law enforcement. The U.S. is the second largest non-EU supplier of food and feed to the UK, behind Brazil. The FSA is seeking to gain more control over imports, but Port Health as well as Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are active partners. This initiative aims to target third country imports on a risk basis, and ultimately may lead to increased import checks and sampling/costs for U.S. products.

Portugal and Spain see big increase in their GM corn area: (Posted by Madrid) Spain witnessed a record year in the adoption of Bt corn with 97,326ha planted in 2011. This corresponds to 26.5% of all grain corn planted in the country and an increase of 20,751ha or 27% from last year, according to the latest data published by the Ministry of Food, Rural and Marine Affairs (MARM).

Portugal is the second largest producer of GM crops in the EU after Spain. The country's area under GM corn is expected to rise by about 59% in 2011 to 7,724 ha, based on the mandatory notifications submitted by farmers to the Ministry of Agriculture, Sea, and Land Planning (MAMAOT). This is due to a higher overall corn area, severe corn borer attacks in the previous campaign, and to the temporary suspension of new applications for agri-environmental payments that discriminate against GM crops.

Spanish Government hosts day seminar to discuss the European Commission's proposal for the 2012 fishing opportunities: (Posted by Madrid) The Spanish Secretary General for the Sea commented the recent presentation of the first European Commission proposal for the 2012 fishing opportunities for certain stocks in the Atlantic and the North Sea, saying that Spain will defend that the levels of total allowable catch (TAC) be in accordance to scientific reports and that they constitute a guarantee for the profitability and sustainability of the activity of the Spanish fleet. Alicia Villauriz noted that the EC proposal contains a substantial increase of quota in Spanish waters of hake (15%) and monkfish (200%), in line with scientific reports that mention a good level of stocks.

The Secretary, who was speaking at the opening of a day seminar to discuss the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) organized by the Ministry of Food, Rural and Marine Affairs (MARM), said that there is a need for the CFP to “contemplate in a equal stand its economic, social, and environmental pillars”. As such the Secretary noted that Spain is seeing this reform with preoccupation, in particular, for the lack of detail in some of the objectives proposed by the European Commission such as the maximum sustainable yield or the policy of zero discards. The Spanish government is asking for a clarification of the instruments proposed to reach these objectives as well as an extension of the timetable for its application, with the end goal of reducing its impact on the fishing sector.

EU27 Potato situation: (Posted by The Hague) Ware potato production in 2011 is expected to crease in the EU. Given a stable demand from the fresh market, the output of potato products for MY11/12 is also expected to be slightly higher than in the previous marketing year. Subsequently, EU exports in MY10/12 are also expected to increase, which will likely create additional competition for US exports in shared markets.

Recent reports

Post	Title	Date Released
Rome	Agricultural News for Italy EU and World September 2011	9/29/2011
Stockholm	Sweden’s position on Agriculture and Innovation	9/27/2011
Stockholm	Denmark’s position on Agriculture and Innovation	9/27/2011
Budapest	Lack of Due Process Threatens U.S. Biotech Firms	9/23/2011
The Hague	NGOs ask retailers to sign petition against cloning	9/20/2011
Sofia	New Government Strategy for the Dairy and Livestock Sectors	9/20/2011
Berlin	Press Coverage of Minister Aigner’s Upcoming U.S. Visit	9/16/2011
Sofia	U.S. Distilled Spirits Sales Increase 2	9/16/2011
Rome	CSSF END-OF-YEAR BUDGET REVIEW	9/15/2011
Rome	Agricultural News for Italy EU and World August 2011	9/13/2011
The Hague	Potatoes and Potato Products Annual	9/9/2011
Rome	Greece Dairy Annual 2011	9/9/2011
Warsaw	U.S. Assistance to Poland’s Conversion to Democracy Recognized	9/8/2011
Rome	FAS Rome Hosts International Food Defense Capacity Building Team	9/8/2011
Sofia	Exporter Guide - Bulgaria	9/2/2011
Sofia	Growth of U.S. Seafood Exports in Bulgaria	9/2/2011
Sofia	Sharp growth in U.S. Tree Nuts Exports to Bulgaria in 2011	9/2/2011
Sofia	15 Percent Growth in U.S. Snack Foods Exports to Bulgaria in 2011	9/2/2011
Madrid	EU27 Tree Nuts Annual	9/2/2011
Paris	Agricultural Biotechnology Annual	8/1/2011