

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

One the occasion of the start of the Portuguese Presidency, CIAA Director General Mella Frewen and CIAA President Jean Martin travelled to Lisbon to hold a series of high-level political meetings, notably with Mr Jaime Silva, Minister for agriculture, rural development and fisheries of Portugal. Mrs Frewen and Mr Martin also met with key economic journalists. A special thanks should be expressed to Pedro Queiroz and our Portuguese National Federation for setting up these successful meetings.

GM Food and Feed

Amending Regulation on comitology

The EP ENVI Committee adopted the Scheele draft report on amending Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 on GM food and feed (implementing powers conferred on the Commission) on 17/07. On a positive note MEPs followed the CIAA voting recommendation and overwhelmingly rejected amendments aiming at bringing into the scope of the Regulation products obtained from animals fed GM feed. However, MEPs did adopt almost all of the other amendments aiming at extending the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, including covering the authorisation of individual applications in the case of GM food. The report as adopted will now go forward for adoption at first reading during the 24-27/09 plenary session.

Food Chain and Animal Health

Stakeholders Tackle Broad Spectrum of Issues at July Meeting of DG SANCO Advisory Group on Food Chain and Animal Health

On 05/07, CIAA attended a pre-summer break plenary meeting of DG SANCO's Advisory Group on the Food Chain, Animal Health and Plant Health, at which a diverse range of issues were considered, including the White Paper on Obesity and Nutrition; the state of play with regard to general food labelling and nutrition labelling; the establishment of fees for the processing of authorisation files by EFSA, and GMO-labelling.

With regard to the latter, the Group was informed that EFSA had been requested to clarify whether there would be any scientific arguments that would speak in favour of the labelling of food produced from animals fed with GMOs. This request had been specifically targeted towards the potential to which transgenes or their products may be incorporated into animal tissues or products such as eggs and milk in view of the fate of recombinant protein and DNA within the gastrointestinal tract of livestock. Unsurprisingly, certain stakeholders, namely the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) were in favour of the concept of GMO-labelling. Meanwhile, the European Seed Association (ESA) did not oppose the idea, provided

that clear implementation rules were established, a move which would inevitably require the reopening of Regulation 1829/2003 on GM Food and Feed. A large number of stakeholders, CIAA included, spoke out against GM-labelling, however.

On 23/07, EFSA published a statement in response to the abovementioned request, concluding that rDNA fragments or proteins derived from GM plants had not been detected in tissues, fluids or edible products of farm animals like broilers, cattle, pigs or quails. A copy of the statement can be found at http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/gmo/statements0/efsa_statement_dna_protein_gastroint.html.

WTO Doha Round

Multilateral trade negotiations gained momentum on 17/07 when negotiating committee chair C. Falconer circulated draft modalities on agriculture. The terms set out in the proposal are based on "potential centres of gravity" found in intense negotiations in the last months, and present very specific figures or small ranges of numbers, which could form the basis for an ambitious future agricultural agreement. On domestic subsidies, the pressure has increased on the US, and the EU will have reached its utmost limit on agricultural market access. EU Trade Commissioner Mandelson feels that "the chairs have distributed the pain fairly" and that the "text presents us with a manageable situation within our red lines". Progress has also been made on issues of export competition including food aid, but other areas, in particular the selection and treatment of 'special products' or 'differential export taxes' have not yet advanced. WTO members are expected to continue work on this basis and start in-depth negotiations in September.

Trade

The proceedings of the Commission Consultation on EU Agri-Food Export Interests held on 25/06 in Brussels are now available on the Commission website. The Conference was attended by several food and drink representatives, including from CIAA. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/foodexport2007/index_en.htm