

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

CIAA/GMA meeting - CIAA hosted a meeting with a GMA delegation this week in order to exchange views and information on topical issues (WTO and Diet and health related issues). This meeting was the opportunity to provide a joint input from CIAA and GMA into the development of the EU/US Conference on Good practices for action in the area of Diet, Physical Activity and health. This conference is planned for the 11 and 12 May 2006 in conjunction with the next plenary meeting of the EU platform. 150 participants are expected from both sides of the Atlantic including public authorities, stakeholders, academics and the EU platform members. The aim of the conference is to identify ideas for improving the actions of the EU platform and to give grounds for future transatlantic cooperation on topics identified as areas of action of the EU platform.

Claims

On 21/03, the EP ENVI Committee adopted the Poli Bortone recommendation for second reading on nutrition and health claims on foods. On the 2 key issues - article 4 and the procedures - MEPs adopted, by a large majority, the compromise amendment on registration and on article 4 (nutrient profiles) MEPs adopted by a slim majority a provision for disclosure for nutrition claims (but not health claims). In line with the CIAA position, MEPs also adopted amendments excluding trademarks, replacing scientific data by knowledge, reinforcing data protection and improving the transitional measures. However, amendments deleting 'beneficial' and allowing for comparative claims were rejected by the Committee. In addition, MEPs adopted provisions on claims directed exclusively at children and allowing consumer organisations to judge the perception of a claim. The recommendation will now go forward for adoption at second reading by the plenary on 16/05.

Addition of vitamins and minerals

On 21/03 the EP ENVI Committee adopted the Scheele recommendation for second reading on the addition of vitamins and minerals and certain other substances to foods. MEPs adopted amendments clarifying that a ban on fortification can be instituted only if there are grounds for fearing that there will be a danger to public health if the allowed daily intake is exceeded. On maximum levels, MEPs adopted the amendment calling on the Commission to submit proposals within 2 years. However, the industry supported amendments clarifying that any restrictions should be defined only on the basis of justifiable safety grounds were rejected. MEPs also adopted amendments calling for additional labelling requirements. The recommendation will now go forward for adoption at second reading by the plenary on 16/05/06.

Television Without Frontiers

Work in the EP on the revision of the Television without frontiers directive is getting underway. The Culture Committee (lead) has appointed Ruth

Hieronimi (EPP, Germany) as rapporteur and 5 other Committees will do opinions. As far as the timetable is concerned, Mrs Hieronimi will draft her report by July; the Culture Committee will adopt it on 9/10 and first reading is scheduled for either the 13-16/11 or 11-14/12 plenary session.

Acrylamide

European Commission Hosts Workshop on Acrylamide - On 16-17/03 the European Commission, following the recommendations of CIAA, invited industry representatives, academics, stakeholders, governmental experts and Commission experts from various Directorates-General to exchange views on latest developments regarding the process contaminant acrylamide (AA), namely: AA formation pathways, analytical aspects, ongoing academic research on mitigation, efforts on mitigation, and latest findings with regard to home cooking and catering. On the second day, the 110 participants discussed these issues in four breakout sessions dealing with potatoes, cereals, coffee and home cooking, before reporting back on findings in a plenary session. The participants reported that they looked forward to further improvement of the CIAA Toolbox on Acrylamide, and advised that the Toolbox be more efficiently promoted in order to make it accessible for SMEs. Translation of the text into multiple languages was therefore necessary.

Other recommendations raised at the meeting included the analysis of other substances formed through heat treatment, the validation and standardisation of analytical methods, and the consideration of risk/risk and risk/benefit in AA assessment. Participants supported the concept of monitoring by governmental bodies, using schemes which are objective, comparable, constructive and reflecting exposure levels. All agreed that AA mitigation must not become a competitive issue.

ETP Board Gathers for Second Time

On 14/03, the Board of the European Technology Platform Food for Life (ETP F4L) assembled for the second time. The discussions focused on the draft of the Stakeholder Strategic Research Agenda (SSRA),

which had been prepared by a small team from the "Horizontal Activities" Working Group. The text will now be further amended before its presentation to the Commission in early April.

The Board also agreed that the main focus of further activities should be on the establishment of a national "Mirror Group", which should be created with the close cooperation of national federations.

Food Contact Materials

The second meeting of the "Packaging Inks Joint Industry Task Force" (PIJITF) took place on 13/03. Participants attending the meeting agreed the Terms of Reference and membership for the group, and decided to create two working groups to address, respectively, the issues of prioritisation of substances and data collection, and risk analysis and analytical methods. The next meeting of the task force, where a draft work plan for each working group should be presented, is scheduled to take place in June.

Following this meeting, the Terms of Reference of the PIJITF were transmitted to DG Sanco, and the PIJITF was presented to Member States at a Commission Working Party meeting on food contact materials on 21/03. DG Sanco and the Member States welcomed the initiative and enquired about the time frame and work plan, to which the chairman of the PIJITF responded that following the June meeting of the PIJITF, a work plan for the working groups would be made available, and that he would be happy to present it at a next Member State meeting.

The Commission Working Party meeting on 21/03 March addressed the following issues:

- Presentation from the Metal Vacuum Closures Industry Group on the time frame for compliance of lids.
- Draft proposal for a Commission Regulation laying down the principles of good manufacturing practice in respect of materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods.
- Draft proposal for a Commission Regulation on active and intelligent materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods.

Trade

Foodstuffs quality: on 20/03 the Agriculture Council adopted the regulation on the protection of geographical indications (GI) and designations of origin (DO). The main changes compared to current legislation concern the introduction of a single document for applications, the possibility for third countries operators' to submit registration application directly through the Commission. Further to the adoption of the new regulation, the Commission will undertake a fundamental review of this policy.

Non Annex I products: The Commission is working on the introduction of differentiated refunds according to destination on the basis of Regulation 800/99, including derogations which would exempt some NAI exports from providing proofs of arrival. The NAI Management Committee on 17/02 held a discussion on this issue but no working document was tabled. Nevertheless, DG Enterprise plans a vote on a draft legal text on 7/04.

WTO Negotiations

The London G6 ministerial meeting held on 10-11/03 with the EU, US, Brazil, India, Japan, Australia did not bring the expected progress that would clearly allow the process to come to a conclusion by the end of April. The meeting was used by the WTO Director General to make pressure on Brazil and India for NAMA, on the US for domestic support and on the EU for AMA. But neither Brazil nor India showed decisive movements. Commissioner Mandelson repeated this week at the EP that joint final moves from the different participants were necessary "we now need to deal with all negotiating areas simultaneously. There is a limited number of cards left on the table - and they are the big ones. They cannot be played in isolation. The lesson of the London meeting is that the time of incremental steps, small moves and small concessions, is over." Negotiations in agriculture are pursued this week in Geneva. Further meetings of the G6 are scheduled between now and mid-April.