

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

Timeline of CIAA Reaction to non-predictable and adventitious presence of non-authorized LL RICE 601

On 18/08, the United States informed the European Community that US long grain rice, exported in large volumes to the EC, had been found to contain a genetically modified event, LL RICE 601, unauthorized at Community level. CIAA was subsequently informed of this by the Commission on 22/08. On 24/08, the Commission published its Decision on emergency measures regarding the non-authorized genetically modified organism LL RICE 601 in rice products. CIAA received a letter from DG SANCO on 01/09, reminding the food industry of its legal responsibility to conduct "due diligence" with regard to the placing of products on the market. A CIAA response to this letter was submitted to DG SANCO on 07/09, reassuring the Commission that the food and drink industry followed the requirements of the Decision immediately upon its publication. Therefore, operators intend, within the framework of suitable self-control measures, to ensure the absence of genetically modified LL RICE 601 in the products which they place on the market. This therefore includes testing of rice and rice products, as mentioned in the Commission Decision, using the validated test method which has been available since 01/09. **continued ...**

CIAA reaction on non-authorized LL RICE 601

...continued

CIAA is now urgently awaiting a safety assessment of LL RICE 601 by EFSA, which we believe would help Member States to implement common measures throughout Europe and, as a consequence, to reassure consumers with regard to the safety of the supply chain.

During a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health on 11/09, Member States were informed of the LL RICE 601 test results, presented by FERM, the European Rice Association. Member States did not present any test results at this meeting, but were encouraged by the Commission to continue testing and monitoring.

The next crucial date will be the Agricultural Council on 18/09, when the Commission is supposed to report about the rice issue. Meanwhile, CIAA members continue to follow the requirements of the Commission Decision of 23/09 August.

Advisory Group on Animal By-Products

On 07/09, CIAA attended a working group of the DG SANCO Advisory Group on Food Chain and Animal Health, assembled to discuss a draft proposal for a Regulation on animal by-products. The draft, which would repeal the current Regulation (EC) N° 1774/2002, follows a report submitted by the Commission to the Parliament and Council last October, highlighting a number of weaknesses in the current legislation, eg. disproportionate requirements for very low-risk products, areas of duplication with other legislation, and areas where uncertainty remains with regard to the scope. A copy of the Commission report can be accessed via the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/animalbyproducts/by_products_report_en.pdf

In view of the fact that the latest draft of the text had been made available only the day before the

meeting, the Commission stressed that the consultation was only preliminary, and that all industry comments on the text in the coming months would be reflected in the impact assessment document which would accompany the draft legislation. DG SANCO is hopeful that the draft will be adopted by the Commission and submitted to the Parliament and Council for approval in late January/early February next year.

Allergens

Commission Standing Committee (SCFCAH) votes on including molluscs and lupin in the list of mandatory labelled allergens.

Further to a recent Commission request on the appropriateness for inclusion of molluscs, fructose, lupin and their derived products in the list of food allergens laid down in Annex IIIa under Directive 2000/13, EFSA pointed out in its Opinions that:

- fructose is not an allergen but a sugar, for which certain people do not have tolerance;
- for lupin, there is no information on the frequency of allergy in the general population, but an important rate of cross reactivity can be observed in people allergic to peanuts;
- for molluscs, 0.4% of the population is allergic.

On 19/07 the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health voted by qualified majority (in favour: 308 votes; abstentions: 13 votes) on mandatory labelling of molluscs and lupin. Following the request of Member States the transition periods were adjusted.

From the moment the Directive is published in the Official Journal, the operators have two years to adopt their labels accordingly:

- 12 months for the transposition of the Directive into national legislation;
- 12 months - transition period for the products. Products labelled prior to the 12-month period shall be authorized until the stocks run out.

Detailed EFSA opinions on the allergenicity of molluscs, lupin and fructose are available on CIAA web-site

Food Ingredients

At the end of July, the European Commission adopted a package of four legislative proposals on food additives, enzymes, flavourings, and their authorization procedures.

The package introduces harmonised EU legislation on food enzymes, updates current rules for flavourings and additives, and creates a simplified common approval procedure for food additives, flavourings and enzymes, based on scientific opinions from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The package of proposals has been transmitted to the European Parliament and to the Council according to the co-decision procedure.

While the Parliament still has to confirm the rapporteur(s) and timeline for discussions, the Council will already hold a first debate on 20/09, and discussions at Council are scheduled on 05/10 and 15/10, 08/11 and 17/11, under the Finnish Presidency.

WTO

WTO Director General Pascal Lamy announced on 24/07 a temporary suspension of the DDA negotiations, as Trade Ministers of the G6 did not advance on agricultural market access and domestic support issues. After the summer break, Brazil held a G20 meeting on 09/09 and invited WTO Director General Pascal Lamy, Peter Mandelson and Susan Schwab, who recognized the urgent need to advance negotiations. No concrete results can be reported, although the EU seemed to have offered additional cuts in domestic support. Negotiations are unlikely to

advance before US mid term elections on 07/11, however, negotiating partners hope to advance the DDA at the beginning of next year before the US fast track authority expires in 07/07.

Trade

On 11/09 DG Trade Director General David O'Sullivan briefed the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) on DG Trade's work in the second half of 2006. He informed about a Commission's green paper on reforming the anti-dumping system, upcoming bilateral initiatives such as China, India, and Korea or regional initiatives such as ASEAN. He defended bilateral work as very important and timely, which would not undermine or substitute the work on the DDA, as bilateral agreements would always be understood as something on top of the WTO Doha results.

CIAA Congress

CIAA 2006 Congress - Food for Life..., meeting consumers' needs

On 26 and 27 of October, CIAA, The Confederation of the food and drink industries of the EU, will hold its bi-annual congress at the Hilton Hotel (Brussels). With the theme "Food for life ..., meeting consumers' needs," CIAA expects about 350 delegates from the food and drink industry, public institutions, consumer organisations, science and press, both from Europe and beyond.

Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU

Avenue des Arts, 43 - B-1040 Brussels

Publication: T. Habotte, S. Naccachian. Tel: +32 2 514 11 11 - Fax: +32 2 511 29 05 - E-mail : ciaa@ciaa.be