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European Union

Agricultural Situation

This Week in European Agriculture

2002

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Report Highlights:

U.S. links EU ban on GM food to famine in Africa * Trade Commissioner Lamy sceptical of U.S. trade plans * Cigarettes advertizing ban * Food Additives * Recent USEU Reports * What's new on our Website * What's new on the DG Sanco website *

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2], E2

This Week in European Union Agriculture is a weekly review of European Union policies and developments of interest to the U.S. agricultural community. The issues summarized in this report cover a wide range of subject matter obtained from European press reports, government press releases, and host country agricultural officials and representatives. Substantive issues and developments are generally also reported in detail in separate reports from this office.

Disclaimer: Any press report summaries in this report are included to bring U.S. readership closer to the pulse of European developments in agriculture. In no way do the views and opinions of these sources reflect the point of view or official policy of USDA, the U.S. Mission to the EU or any other U.S. Government agency's point of view or official policy.

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PRESS RELEASES

U.S. LINKS EU BAN ON GM FOOD TO FAMINE IN AFRICA - The U.S. raised the spectre of famine in Africa in demanding that the EU relax restrictions on genetically modified food. On November 28, the EU Agriculture Ministers agreed a compromise deal to label food or animal feed containing more than 0.9% of GMO's. This deal was seen as a step towards lifting the GMO ban in seven member states (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg) but the U.S. Ambassador to the EU, Rockwell Schnabel, said that the EU had to go much further to meet the demands of the U.S. where the biotech industry is a major player.

"The lack of EU progress on restarting biotech approvals and the Commission's GMO labeling proposals have failed to counter the scare-mongering on biotech that has gripped the developing world. We must find ways to deal with the humanitarian crisis in Africa - together - in spite of our differences on biotechnology. It is no longer a matter of consumer preference, human lives are at stake. We have stated that the Commission's labeling proposals are unworkable, costly and subject to fraud. We believe the proposals will seriously impair trade in agricultural biotech products and make it harder for developing countries to reap the benefits of a promising new technology to address hunger and malnutrition" Ambassador Schnabel told the European Policy Center.

TRADE COMMISSIONER LAMY SCEPTICAL OF U.S. TRADE PLANS - Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy has branded radical U.S. proposals to scrap tariffs on a wide range of goods unrealistic, but pledged Europe will meet commitments to free up trade in politically-sensitive agricultural products. "The U.S. are trying to move the thing forward but we need things developing countries can buy and they will never buy general agreement that all industrial tariffs have to put down to zero in 2015. It just won't float" he said. U.S.-EU trade relations have been overshadowed this year by rows over steel, a U.S. export scheme and disputes over Europe's moratorium on genetically modified products. But Lamy played down the strains and said the disputes showed the importance of the settlement procedures of the WTO. "I certainly cannot be portrayed as dragging my feet on agriculture. We have taken negotiating commitments to reduce export support, to increase domestic market access, to reduce production-linked domestic support" Lamy said.

TOBACCO: POLITICAL AGREEMENT ON CIGARETTES ADVERTIZING BAN - On December 2, Ministers at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council reached political agreement on a new tobacco advertizing directive and adopted a recommendation on the prevention of smoking which complements the directive. The new directive foresees a general ban on tobacco in all media, including the Internet and on sponsorship for events or activities with cross-border implications. Member states will have to comply with the directive by July 31, 2005 at the latest. The text of the directive can be downloaded from http://europa.eu.int/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=165560, "Questions & Answers on tobacco advertizing" are published on DG Sanco's website at http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/library/press/press258_en.pdf.

FOOD ADDITIVES: ADDITIONAL USES AND HARMONIZATION PROPOSED - The European Commission has proposed amendments to the current authorizations for food additives on the EU market. These amendments concern mainly new uses for additives that are already authorized in the EU and the harmonization of the use of food additives in flavorings. Other changes concern the approval of one new additive and the withdrawal of a number of additives. The full proposal can be downloaded from: http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/sfp/addit_flavor/additives/proposal_2002_0662_en.pdf (Also see GAIN report E22121)

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UPCOMING MEETINGS OF INTEREST

- Copenhagen European Council, December 12-13

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RECENT REPORTS FROM USEU BRUSSELS

Report Number	Title	Date
E22121	Food Additives - Additional Uses and Harmonization	Dec. 4, 2002
E22119	This Week in European Agriculture	Nov. 29, 2002

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE - The FAS/USEU website is update daily. Also you can sign up to receive the monthly "What's new on our web" e-mail newsletter. To view the website, log onto www.useu.be/agri/usda.html.

What's new on the USEU Agric Website - November 2002

CURRENT ISSUES:

- Biotechnology (updated)
www.useu.be/agri/GMOs.html

- Margin of Preference (MOP) (updated)
www.useu.be/agri/mop.html
- Veterinary Equivalency Agreement (updated)
www.useu.be/agri/vet.html
- Animal by-products (Questions & Answers published by DG Sanco)
www.useu.be/agri/by-products.html
- Enlargement (updated)
www.useu.be/agri/enlargement.html

EXPORTER ASSISTANCE:

- Marketing Standards for Citrus
www.useu.be/agri/Fruit-Veg.html
- Organic Foods (updated)
www.useu.be/agri/organic.html
- High Quality Beef Quota (updated)
www.useu.be/agri/beefquotas.html

REPORTS:

- This week in European Agriculture (NEW !)
www.useu.be/agri/weekly.html
- Dairy Annual
www.useu.be/agri/dairy2.html
- EU 2002 Beef Sector Subsidies
www.useu.be/agri/commod.html & www.useu.be/agri/livestock.html
- EU-Lebanon Association Agreement
www.useu.be/agri/commod.html & www.useu.be/agri/tarreduc.html
- F&V CY 2001 Statistics, F&V Export Refunds
www.useu.be/agri/hortireps.html
- EU Prepackaging Sizes under Review
www.useu.be/agri/commod.html
- Exporter Guide France
www.useu.be/agri/fairs.html

- Seafood Report Denmark
www.useu.be/agri/seafood2.html

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WHAT'S NEW ON THE DG-SANCO (DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION) WEBSITE

Novel Foods - responses to the discussion paper "Implementation of regulation 258/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning novel foods and novel food ingredients".
http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/novel_food/responses/responses_en.html

On-line consultation on animal protection during transportation
http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/aw/aw-transport_en.html

Commission proposes new uses of food additives and improved rules for flavorings
http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/02/1776|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

BSE - Testing: Monthly reports of member states on BSE and Scrapie (updated)
http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/bse/testing/bse_results_en.html

Questions & Answers on tobacco advertizing
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/library/press/press258_en.pdf

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