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European Union

Agricultural Situation

This Week in European Agriculture

2002

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Report Highlights:

**EU Annual Report on US Trade Barriers * Enlargement * EU-Chile Agreement *
Animal Welfare * Prestige Oil Spill in Spain * EU Prepackaging Sizes * USEU
Reports * 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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EU ANNUAL REPORT ON US TRADE BARRIERS - On November 20, the European Commission released its eighteenth annual report on barriers to trade and investment in the US. The report is available at the Internet at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/bilateral/usa/usa.htm>.

ENLARGEMENT - The EU Foreign Ministers at the November 18 General Affairs Council (GAC) formally decided that the EU would be enlarged on May 1, 2004. While initially, the date of January 1, 2004 was always mentioned as the accession date, the Danish Presidency reasoned that ratification by CC-10 parliaments would "take some time" so January 1 was "too optimistic." The EU's 15 member states and the 10 candidate countries hope to reach agreement on enlargement at the EU Summit in Copenhagen on December 12-13. Even with the agreement between EU 15 member states on capping the agriculture budget until 2015, agriculture subsidies still tends to be a sticking point. While no one expects enlargement to be derailed over "50,000 tons of dairy quota" to quote one Commission official, hard negotiations and last minute bargaining up to and during the Copenhagen summit can be expected.

EU-CHILE AGREEMENT - The EU and Chile signed an Association Agreement on November 18. According to a Commission press release the trade section covers all the areas of trade and goes well beyond EU and Chile's WTO commitments. The agreement includes a Wines and Spirits Agreement that will recognize each parties' protected names and oenological practices. Also, an SPS Agreement covering trade in animal. Animal products and plants is part to the accord. Further information on the EU-Chile Association Agreement can be found at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/bilateral/chl.htm>

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/chile/intro/index.htm

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/pdf/chile.pdf>

ANIMAL WELFARE - On November 19, the European Commission released a report on "Animal Welfare Legislation on Farmed Animals in Third Countries and the Implications for the EU". The report compares animal welfare standards in the European Union with standards in third country trading partners and analyzes ways to avoid potential competitive disadvantages as a result of disparities in measures. The full report is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/aw/index_en.html

(Also see GAIN Report E22112).

EU STANDS BY FISHERMEN, FISH AND SHELLFISH FARMERS - On Tuesday, November 19, 2002 the tanker 'Prestige', which had been leaking oil off the north-west coast of Spain sank. The tanker was carrying approximately 77,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil and experts are worried that if the oil reaches the coastline, it may be years before certain species recover. On November 20, EU Fisheries Commissioner Franz Fischler declared "I feel for the fishermen on the Spanish coast. Through no fault of their own, they now are part of this disastrous oil spill, and their livelihoods are threatened. The EU won't let them down. Fishermen who have to stop their fisheries activities because of this ecological disaster can count on EU aid to compensate them for the temporary cessation of their activities. Spain has earmarked 117.7 million euros under the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance for this purpose."

EU PREPACKAGING SIZES UNDER REVIEW - EU legislation on prepackaging sizes can be simplified and improved. In order to make justifiable policy choices the European Commission has launched two complementary on-line consultations, consisting of a survey questionnaire and a discussion forum. The Commission services have also produced a working paper to guide the debate. The working paper concludes that in general there does not seem to be a public interest that justifies fixing sizes by means of legislation. Stakeholder views gathered so far show that next to unit prices, consumers want standard sizes that better fit their needs. Manufacturers' views vary. Some sectors with fixed sizes want to keep them, while other sectors consider free sizes to be essential to innovation. Other sectors that were traditionally in favor of fixed sizes want to move to free sizes. (Also see GAIN Report E22115)

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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
E22109	EU Bovine Sector Subsidies	Nov. 15, 2002
E22110	EU-Lebanon Association Agreement	Nov. 15, 2002
E22112	Animal Welfare	Nov. 19, 2002
E22113	Chirac-Schroeder Budget Deal	Nov. 20, 2002
E22114	EU Enlargement - May 2004 Set As Date	Nov. 20, 2002
E22115	EU Prepackaging Sizes Review	Nov. 20, 2002
E22116	Dairy - Annual Report	Nov. 21, 2002

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

- Plant Health / Pesticides Safety

New section: Seeds

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/ph_ps/seeds/index_en.htm

- EU MRL's sorted by crop (updated 20/11/2002)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/ph_ps/pest/09-99.pdf

- EU MRL's sorted by pesticide (updated 20/11/2002)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/ph_ps/pest/09-99-2.pdf

- EU MRL's sorted by food commodity (updated 20/11/2002)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/ph_ps/pest/09-99-3.pdf

International Food Safety Issues

- Codex Alimentarius: CCFICS - Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/ifsi/eupositions/ccfics/ccfics_index_en.html

Bio-terrorism

- Speech by George Gouvras, Adviser in charge of the Task Force on health security

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph/programmes/bio-terrorism/bioterrorism_30_10_2002_en.pdf

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