

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary - Public

Date: 11/4/2009

GAIN Report Number: SW9015

Sweden

Post: Stockholm

Sweden First to Propose Guidelines for Climate Effective Food Choice

Report Categories:

Trade Policy Monitoring

Approved By:

Steve Huete

Prepared By:

Bettina Dahlbacka

Report Highlights:

Swedish authorities have developed guidelines on environmentally friendly food choices. Recommendations include eating locally produced meat, chicken, fruits, vegetables and berries, eating sustainable fish, avoiding bottled water and palm oil, limiting rice consumption as it produces large amounts of methane. The European Commission thinks the recommendations to eat more locally produced food contravene the principles of free movement of goods and has asked Sweden to revise its guidelines by November 26, 2009.

General Information:

The Swedish National Food Administration has been working with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency to develop guidelines on environmentally friendly food choices. In addition to health aspects, the new food recommendations include information on the impact of food on climate and

the environment. The aim is to provide consumers with advice on how they can reduce the environmental impacts of food consumption through their food choices. The guidelines suggest that, apart from a few exceptions, healthy food choices can go hand in hand with choices that are good for the environment.

The guidelines cover the following food groups: meat (beef, lamb, pork and chicken), fish and shellfish, fruit, vegetables and legumes, potatoes, cereals and rice, fats and water. Recommendations include eating locally produced meat, chicken, fruits, vegetables and berries, eating sustainable fish, avoiding bottled water and palm oil, limiting rice consumption as it produces large amounts of methane.

According to the guidelines, meat is the food group that has the greatest impact on the environment. The recommendations are to choose locally produced meat, eat meat less often and in smaller quantities or to exchange a couple of meat dishes per week to vegetarian meals. Also, the guidelines list various facts on the environmental impact of different foods. For example, one kilo of beef contributes up to 15-25 kg of greenhouse gases compared to the much lower emissions of 2-5 kg for chicken and pigs.

In order for the National Food Administration to formally release its guidelines, they have to be approved by the other EU countries. In May 2009, the document was sent out for comments and feedback. Sweden is the first EU country to propose guidelines for environmentally effective food choices and the authorities were hoping that the initiative will be followed by other countries. However, in a response of August 17, 2009, the Commission found that the National Food Administration's recommendations to eat more locally produced food contravene the principles of free movement of goods - one of the cornerstones of the EU internal market. The Commission thinks that the same environmental concerns can be maintained without directly recommending buying domestically produced products at the expense of imported products from other Member States. The Swedish authorities are to provide revised guidelines by November 26, 2009.

In Sweden, the reactions to the guidelines have been vague. Reportedly, the Swedish Meat Industry Association pointed out that the National Food Administration's try to climate adjust their food guidelines only will confuse the environmental aspects with the nutritional aspects of food choices.

The full document, entitled "Environmentally Effective Food Choices" can be found at:
http://www.slv.se/upload/dokument/miljo/environmentally_effective_food_choices_proposal_eu_2009.pdf