

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

Finally, the corrected text of the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation 1924/2006 was published in the Official Journal on 18 January 2007 as a Corrigendum to the wrongly published text of the common position of 30th December 2006. The date of the entry into force is 19 January 2007.

Commission launches initiatives

Commission Launches Initiatives to Improve Stakeholder Consultation and Regulatory Impact Assessment

On 12/01, CIAA attended the plenary session of the Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal Health, a stakeholder forum hosted on an ad-hoc basis by the European Commission. At the meeting, stakeholders were informed that the Commission intended to host meetings of the Advisory Group on a more regular basis in future, with plenary sessions taking place in May/June and October and, in the interim, specific Working Groups dedicated to each "major proposal," to which a smaller number of concerned stakeholders would be invited.

The bulk of the plenary discussion focused on a wide range of issues, including the DG SANCO Stakeholder Involvement Peer Review Group, established in June 2006 to evaluate and provide recommendations for the improvement of stakeholder consultations; the use of impact assessments by DG SANCO; the possible introduction of EFSA fees, and the new Comitology procedure. Stakeholders were informed that an Impact Assessment Board had been established by the Commission, composed of five Directors-General (but excluding the SANCO DG) and chaired by the Secretary-General. From January 2007 onwards, any DG, before launching inter-service consultation, would be obliged to send its proposal to the Board. The Board would be responsible for determining whether an impact assessment should be performed on the proposal (during which time it would listen to input from stakeholders) and, if so, for writing a "prompt letter" to the Director-General concerned proposing the assessment. In parallel with this initiative, the Commission is also in the process of developing an Action Plan to reduce unnecessary administrative burden of legislation by 25%. Cost to industry will be one of the key concerns.

Fusarium Toxins Forum

CIAA Attends 4th EC Fusarium Toxins Forum

The Fourth Fusarium Toxins Forum was hosted by the European Commission on 15-16/01, attracting participants from industry, research institutes, Member States and Governments across Europe. During the discussions, industry associations repeatedly expressed concern with regard to the maximum levels for Fusarium in unprocessed, intermediary and final maize and maize products, established by Regulation 1881/2006, which will enter into force on 01/07 and

01/10. To substantiate these concerns, several industry associations, CIAA included, presented data on the levels of Fusarium Toxins which had been systematically collected since 2000. These levels were affected by factors such as climate, harvesting time, origin, time of sowing, cultivars susceptibility, harvest residues processing, borer insects and moisture around fields, thus demonstrating that the levels, which are scheduled to enter into force on 1/01 (for Deoxynivalenol and Zearealone) and 1/10 (for Fumonisin), are simply unrealistic and unachievable.

Food Contact Materials

Two proposals related to Food Contact Materials were adopted at the Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFAH) meeting on 16/01

4th amendment to the Plastics Directive: Draft Commission Directive amending Directive 2002/72/EC relating to plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food and Directive 85/572/EEC laying down the list of simulants to be used for testing migration of constituents of plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs.

Transitional migration limits for plasticisers in closures: Draft Commission Regulation laying down transitional migration limits for plasticisers in gaskets in lids intended to come into contact with foods.

Both texts should shortly be published in the EU Official Journal, once the translations are completed.

Trade

WTO negotiations restarted - Intense discussions of EU-US senior trade and agricultural officials were held last week and appear to have given new impetus to advance the stalled multilateral WTO negotiations. The unofficial agricultural offers on market access seem to envision a EU tariff cut of at least 54 per cent, and a reduction of US domestic support to \$17 billion. However, concessions are already raising alarm in France in the run-up to elections in spring this year, and USTR Susan Schwab stated beginning this week that a break of the current deadlocked trade talks are "many weeks away". Brazil has also been negotiating separately with the US and EU, and met with Indian negotiators ahead of the Davos summit. In depth discussion among G6 members are expected at the World Economic Forum in Davos from 24-28/01. In the meantime, WTO Director General Pascal Lamy asked India to make more agricultural concessions, as he understood that the "US and EU are cooking, which also needs some Indian spices."