

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

CIAA responds to the Green paper - In its response, CIAA welcomed that the Green Paper emphasises the multifactorial nature of diseases linked to unhealthy dietary habits and physical inactivity and calls for a multi-stakeholder response. CIAA emphasised that any Community strategy for the prevention of overweight, obesity and the prevention of chronic diseases should be established in a way that respects free and informed choice for all consumers in Europe, dietary diversity and cultural identity in the Member States and regions of Europe, the need for a strong scientific basis for all policy development, the need for EU policy to give added value over and above what is developed by the Member States, the principle of proportionality and the need for all policy options to be evaluated to determine whether they are meeting the health goals set out for them. CIAA stressed that there is a need for more research in order to better understand all obesity related factors and how to improve consumer understanding of nutrition information, to identify the determinants affecting food choice and how to motivate consumers to adopt healthy lifestyles, to identify the barriers/obstacles to adopt a healthy lifestyle and the factors leading to insufficient physical activity levels, to increase the comparability of prevalence data.

Conference on GM Co existence

CIAA Participates in European Commission-Austrian Presidency Conference on GM Co-Existence

On 4-6/04, a CIAA delegation participated in a conference in Vienna on the subject of the co-existence of genetically modified, conventional and organic crops. The conference, which was jointly hosted by the European Commission and the Austrian Presidency, followed a report by the Commission in March that the development of EU-wide legislation on the co-existence of GM crops with conventional and organic farming did not appear to be justified at this point in time, given both the EU's limited experience with GM crop cultivation and the need to conclude the process of introducing national measures. The aim of the conference was to bring together policymakers, scientists, industry and other stakeholders, in order to generate final input into the Commission's stakeholder consultation on co-existence, before final conclusions were adopted.

Several legislative acts are currently in place to regulate GMOs: Regulation 2001/18 on the release of GMOs into the environment provides for authorisation procedures and labelling and traceability requirements, Regulation 1829/2003 provides for the approval procedures and labelling requirements for GMO derived food and feed, and 1830/2003 sets out traceability requirements. While official co-existence procedures exist in some European countries, these are not available across all Member States.

At the conference, CIAA stated that the co-existence of two or more crops of the same species was not a new challenge. It added that while the food and drink industry was prepared to deliver food products using raw material of either conventional, organic or GMO origin, current consumer demand indicated that there is still a preference for non-GMO derived products. As the food and drink industry offers food

products according to consumer demand, many food companies now seek non-GM derived raw material, or raw material that contains less than 0,9% adventitious contamination of GMOs in conventional produce. CIAA concluded by calling for EU seed legislation incorporating GMO thresholds, and an EU framework legislation on co-existence, which would leave sufficient room for national flexibility to adapt to national conditions.

Research

CIAA Resists EU Bids to Cut Proposed FP7 Budget for Food Research - On 4/04, the European institutions agreed to reduce the total Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) budget proposed by the Commission to 50.18 billion euro, 69% of the figure originally proposed, resulting in a reduction of the budget for the FP7 Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology theme to 1.936 billion euro, 78.9% of the original budget proposed for this particular theme. Consequently, the Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology theme receives the third lowest budget, despite including a wider range of topics than in FP6.

Following the announcement, CIAA met with Jerzy Buzek, the European Parliament Rapporteur for FP7, to raise his awareness about CIAA's concerns with regard to the budget. In addition, the CIAA European Technology Platform "Food For Life", in co-ordination with the other five ETPs affected by this budget cut, is participating in an event in the EP on 25/04 hosted by the rapporteur Jerzy Buzek, and shadow rapporteurs, Vittorio Prodi and Philippe Busquin, to raise awareness of the implications of these cuts in view of the vote in the Industry, Research and Energy Committee in mid-May and first reading in plenary in June.

Environment

Revision of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) - Following the appointment of the rapporteurs for the revision of the WFD (Carline Jackson) and the Thematic Strategy on Waste (Johannes Blokland) it has been decided that the two reports will be debated on and voted in parallel in the EP. Following a first exchange of views without document in the ENVI Committee on 3/05, a consideration of a draft report will take place in July, followed by the Committee vote only in October. The first reading vote in plenary will, therefore, not take place before November. Caroline Jackson has indicated her willingness to consider amendments proposed by industry and asked for concrete proposals by the end of April.

CIAA has strengthened its ties with several other like-minded industry sectors and could reach agreement on a common draft amendment on by-products. This common draft amendment is based on the initial CIAA proposal. The amendment has been forwarded to UNICE and served as basis for discussions during a UNICE core meeting on by-products on 11/04. UNICE thereby decided to finalise an amendment on by-products until the end of April, based on the proposal submitted by CIAA and the other sectors. CIAA will continue to take a leading role also in the finalisation of this common industry amendment to ensure that it reflects the general criteria developed by CIAA.

WTO Negotiations

The CIAA delegation led by Jean-Luc Pelletier met on 31/03 with various WTO agriculture negotiation experts in Geneva to assess the process. The commitment of all major players to meet the end April (or early May) deadline is unchanged, despite the amount of issues still awaiting a decision. Discussions now focus on the "triangle" of issues: AMA (agricultural market access, NAMA (non-agricultural market access) and domestic support in agriculture. According to P. Lamy, this "triangle" includes the "make-or-brake" issues. He repeatedly said that progress would require the US to agree to deeper

cuts in domestic farm support, the EU to lower farm tariffs further, and developing countries to move on industrial tariffs. He used recent visit to Brazil and to India to urge local governments and business to accept more competition from foreign goods. The triangle issues were also at the centre of debates at the meeting held in Rio from 31/03-2/04 and involving Brazil, the EU, US and WTO Director General P. Lamy. In Rio, small progress has been registered, but no breakthrough. EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson briefed on 10/04 EU Member States on current developments in the WTO Doha Development Round. He repeated that the EU was willing to pay more than others, but insisted that other WTO members have not matched so far the EU offer. Some EU Member States had voiced their concerns at the beginning of March, arguing that the Commission is offering too much with too little in return, but apparently, Council members this week renewed their loud and clear commitment to an ambitious Doha Round. Peter Mandelson repeated the EU's ambition to a multilateral approach and to meet the deadline of 30/04 for drafting modalities, which is a key element for further negotiation.

Communications

CIAA publishes its 2005 Annual Report. On Monday 10/04, CIAA issued for online publication its 2005 Annual Report. Highlighting the work of the confederation in 2005, the 46-page Report draws attention to a number of important issues which the food and drink industry faced over the course of the year - issues which will also shape CIAA's work-programme for the foreseeable future.

Outlining the position of the Food and Drink industry; issues on competitiveness, trade matters, food safety issues, diet and nutrition, environment and the ETP programme, the report sums-up CIAA's achievements, objectives and future challenges. Printed copies will be available as of May. The report can be downloaded and pre-ordered online from www.ciaa.be