



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



08.05.09

Agriculture and Rural Development

Commission approves revised Nordic farm aid scheme for Finland - 30/04/2009

The European Commission approved a revision of the nationally financed Nordic Aid scheme for agriculture in the northern part of Finland. So-called Article 142 aid, part of Finland's Accession Treaty, was agreed to help maintain farming in the country's northernmost regions. Following a Commission evaluation of the programme and a Finnish request for modifications, consultations on changes to the system were concluded in December 2008. The changes are reflected in today's Decision. It simplifies the aid scheme by setting maximum aid rates and maximum eligible volumes for the whole area covered by the scheme rather than by sub-region. The different production sectors will be re-grouped into six groups: milk, ruminants, pigs and poultry, horticulture, crop production and other aid (mainly reindeer). Aid to pigs and poultry will be decoupled from production. The maximum authorised aid per year is fixed at €358 million. Payments in the last four years have not exceeded €330 million. To allow for some flexibility in the payment levels between sectors, the sum of the maximum aid amounts for the six production groups is €40 million higher than the overall ceiling, but actual payments may not exceed €358 million per year.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/newsroom/en/340.htm>

Transparency: Recipients of CAP payments now on-line; Germany must fulfil its legal obligations – 01/05/2009

Since midnight on 30th April, details of all recipients of payments under the Common Agricultural Policy must be publicly accessible on websites managed by Member State authorities. Transparency of EU funds is one of the priorities of this Commission. This is taxpayers' money and citizens have the right to know

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how it is used. Germany is the one Member State which has not yet published the data for direct aid payments. The Commission acknowledges that there are legal issues specific to Germany, after injunctions were granted by certain local and regional courts stopping publication in individual cases. The Commission is confident that Germany will take the necessary steps to clear away these obstacles for full publication. However, the Commission also expects Germany to go ahead with the publication of all other beneficiaries not covered by these rulings. If this is not the case, the Commission will not hesitate to initiate infringement proceedings.

For further info [click here](#)

[Animals used in science, seal ban debated in Parliament Committee on Monday – 04/05/09](#)

Currently around 12 million animals a year are used in scientific testing, including primates, who are used because of their psychological and physiological similarity to humans. MEPs discussed the protection of animals used for science on Monday evening along with a proposal to ban the trade in seal products. MEPs on the Agriculture Committee have already called for scientific experiments on animals to be set within strict ethical limits, but said they must not hinder research into serious diseases. MEPs on the Internal Market Committee have called for the seal trade to stop.

For further info [click here](#)

[EP: Viable rules on the welfare of animals at the time of slaughter – 06/05/2009](#)

All forms of unnecessary suffering by animals must be avoided. MEPs have approved the principle that animals must be slaughtered using only methods that ensure death instantly or after stunning but an exemption should be granted for ritual slaughter on grounds of respect for religious freedom, for which they called for the current blanket exemption to be preserved rather than allowing for exemptions to be decided at national level. In addition, MEPs approved the introduction of indicators to detect signs of consciousness or sensibility in animals during killing operations, so as to check the reliability of stunning procedures. This is found in a report adopted by the European Parliament (EP) on plans to tighten up the rules on animal welfare at the time of slaughter.



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The European Commission's [proposal](#) was primarily intended to clarify the rules so they can be more easily applied and protect animals effectively, to prevent red tape and to ensure that imports comply with EU standards. MEPs were in favour of the appointment of an animal welfare officer for each slaughterhouse. However, they stressed that responsibility for ensuring compliance with the rules must lie with the operator or company, not with an individual employee. Nonetheless, to ensure small slaughterhouses remain viable, they argued that, for establishments slaughtering fewer than 1000 livestock units of mammals or 150,000 units of poultry per year, the procedure for obtaining a certificate of competence should be simplified. They called for inspections to be carried out in abattoirs authorised to export to the European Union and for attestations that EU standards have been met to be supplied in addition to the health certificates already required for imports. In addition, Parliament highlighted the need to provide adequate EU funding for European producers in order to compensate for the competitive disadvantage they would suffer. Lastly, MEPs called on the Commission to present, by 1 January 2013, draft legislation on the use of mobile abattoirs. For further info [click here](#)

Two agricultural product names registered - 07/05/2009

The European Commission has added two names of agricultural products and foodstuffs to the Register of Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indications (PGI): Finnish "Lapin Poron liha" (Lapp Reindeer meat - PDO) and Czech "Znojemské pivo" (beer - PGI). These two names are added to the list of about 820 product names already protected under the legislation on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin and traditional speciality.

For further info [click here](#)

EP votes to improve pesticides machinery – 04/05/2009

The European Parliament (EP) voted to improve machinery for applying pesticides in European farms, orchards, vineyards, parks and gardens will be more environmentally friendly, thanks to a measure just adopted by the EP. The EP adopted a short but important amendment to the Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC. The amendment was proposed by the Commission in September 2008 and has now been approved by the EP at first reading. The Council should adopt the text shortly. This will make a significant contribution to the protection of the environment and human health. It will help European farmers and



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gardeners to limit the quantity of pesticides used. The machinery must be designed so that pesticides can be applied only where they are needed. At the same time, the use of the Machinery Directive avoids creating new burdens for the machinery manufacturers, since existing procedures can be used.

This amendment of the Machinery Directive completes the package of legislative measures foreseen in the thematic strategy for the sustainable use of pesticides adopted by the European Commission in 2006. For more info [click here](#)

[EU and US reach provisional agreement in beef dispute – 06/05/2009](#)

EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton and United States Trade Representative Ron Kirk agreed in principle on a way forward in the long-running dispute over hormone-treated beef. Under the terms of the agreement, the U.S. would agree not to impose new so-called 'Carousel' sanctions which were due to come into force this week and would affect a range of EU products including Italian mineral water, Roquefort cheese and a number of other food products. The U.S. would maintain the currently reduced level of existing sanctions against EU products and would eliminate all sanctions beginning in the fourth year of the agreement. In return, the agreement would provide additional duty-free access to the EU market for the type of high quality beef traditionally exported by the U.S. and produced from cattle that have not been treated with growth-promoting hormones. The agreement would provide additional duty-free access for 20,000 tons of beef in the first three years, increasing to 45,000 tons beginning in the fourth year. Before the end of the four-year period, the two sides will seek to agree on the conditions for the settlement applicable beyond that period. For further info [click here](#)

[Temporary suspension of the autonomous common customs tariff duties on certain industrial, agricultural and fishery products](#)

[COM \(2009\) 202](#) Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1255/96 temporarily suspending the autonomous common customs tariff duties on certain industrial, agricultural and fishery products

The Commission, assisted by the Economic Tariff Questions Group, has reviewed all the requests for temporary suspension of autonomous common customs tariff duties presented to it by the Member States. This proposal concerns certain industrial and agricultural products. Requests for suspension relating to the



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above products were examined in the light of the criteria set out in the communication from the Commission concerning autonomous tariff suspensions and quotas. Following this review, the Commission considers that the suspension of duties is justified for the products listed in Annex I of this document. Products for which suspension is no longer in the Community's economic interests have been withdrawn. The annexes to this Regulation list the products for which suspension is proposed, or for which the wording has to be changed, and the products removed from the Annex to Regulation.

The validity period of the measure is 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2013, in order to carry out economic examinations of the individual suspensions in this period. The suspensions shall be extended or deleted after this date.

Moreover, by relieving the Community industry from €11 300 000 duty the production costs for finished products are reduced. This strengthens the market position of goods made inside the EU against competitive products imported from third countries. It is in accordance with the principles set out in Commission Communication concerning autonomous tariff suspensions and quotas. The proposed amendment is an instrument to keep and provide new employment within the European Union. Proposal included in the Commission's Working and Legislative Programme 2009.

Fisheries

COM (2009) 216 Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the establishment of the Community position to be adopted in the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation

According to the second subparagraph of Article 300(2) of the EC Treaty, the positions to be adopted on behalf of the Community in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations when they are called upon to adopt decisions having legal effects, with the exception of decisions supplementing or amending their institutional framework, must be decided on by the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission.

In view of this obligation, and following similar Council Decisions regarding the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, and similar proposals from the European Commission for other



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Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, the European Commission proposes the present decision to establish the Community position to be adopted in the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation. This proposal follows the same approach as for other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations so as to ensure consistency.

COM (2009) 218 Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the establishment of the Community position to be adopted in the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission

According to the second subparagraph of Article 300(2) of the EC Treaty, the positions to be adopted on behalf of the Community in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations when they are called upon to adopt decisions having legal effects, with the exception of decisions supplementing or amending their institutional framework, must be decided on by the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission.

In view of this obligation, and following similar Council Decisions regarding the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, and similar proposals from the European Commission for other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, the European Commission proposes the present decision to establish the Community position to be adopted in the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission. This proposal follows the same approach as for other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations so as to ensure consistency.