



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



05.06.09

Agriculture and Rural Development

No change for rosé wine - 08/06/2009

Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, announced that there will be no changes to the rules on producing rosé wine. Over recent weeks, professional organizations from the wine-making sector have called on the Commission to keep the current ban on the blending of red and white table wines to produce rosé table wine. The 2008 wine reform included changes to the rules on wine-making practices. The implementing regulation, to be voted on by Member States later this month, will maintain the status quo for rosé wine. [Click here](#) for more info

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) Scientific Committee promotes alternatives to animal testing – 08/06/2009

EFSA's Scientific Committee has underlined the importance of risk assessment approaches in the area of food and feed safety which not only minimise the use of experimental animals and their suffering but also lead towards the replacement of animal testing. The published opinion reviews the use of experimental animals in different areas of EFSA's risk assessment activities and outlines strategies which can reduce the number of animal studies needed.

The opinion stresses that animal testing should be carried out in line with guidelines authorized by the European Commission, EU agencies or other international bodies such as the OECD. It also recommends a dialogue between EFSA and the European Commission on the best ways to address the inclusion of new, validated testing methods in existing guidelines based on the replacement, reduction and refinement of animal testing. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of good communication in this area between the different agencies dealing with chemical risk assessment.



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Most of the risk assessments conducted by EFSA require experimental data. It is currently not possible to obtain all the necessary data and information required to ensure a high level of consumer protection without some use of animal experiments.

Lists of the type of internationally-recognised alternative methods to animal testing which are available for different types of studies used in risk assessment are found in the opinion. For instance; acute toxicity, skin irritation and eye irritation testing and moreover these should be used in line with existing Community legislation. Furthermore, for areas where alternative methods cannot provide all of the necessary information, such as reproductive and developmental toxicity, the opinion describes integrated testing and risk assessment strategies which can help to reduce the need for animal experiments.

The opinion also proposes ways to better implement animal welfare practices within EFSA's work. The Scientific Committee notes that, in line with existing EU legislation, applicants submitting dossiers to EFSA should use accepted alternative methods to animal testing whenever possible. Moreover, the opinion emphasizes the importance of fully reflecting the use of such methods in any guidelines for applicants developed by EFSA. The Scientific Committee also recommends that, when carrying out risk assessments, all existing data should be reviewed before any additional animal studies are requested.

This opinion is in line with EFSA's commitment to continuing to improve animal welfare when conducting risk assessments. The Scientific Committee recommended that EFSA should follow up on this opinion with a review of progress in the field of alternatives to animal testing in three years' time. [Click here](#) for more info

The Court of First Instance dismisses the Action brought by Poland against the system under which charges were imposed on the new Member States in respect of certain Agricultural Products – 10/06/2009

The contested regulation, by which charges were imposed on traders holding surplus stocks of certain agricultural products imported into the new Member States or originating in those States, forms part of the transitional measures which the Commission was entitled to adopt by reason of the accession of those States to the European Union and does not infringe the principles of proportionality and non-discrimination on grounds of nationality.

Regulation (EC) No 1972/2003 introduced, *inter alia*, an obligation for the new Member States to impose a charge for deterrent purposes, with effect from the date of their accession to the European Union, on holders of surplus stocks of certain listed agricultural products present on their territory on the date of accession. It also imposed an identical charge on the agricultural



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products featuring on that list which were under a suspensive customs regime within the territory of the enlarged Community on the date of accession.

By its action brought before the Court of First Instance against Regulation No 1972/2003, as amended in particular by Regulation No 735/2004, Poland has challenged the legality of those charges.

As none of the pleas in law raised by Poland can be accepted, the Court dismisses the action in its entirety. [Click here](#) for more info

Fisheries

COM (2009) 261 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT on the implementation of the Action Plan for simplifying and improving the Common Fisheries Policy

Following, the Commission's adoption in December 2005, the *2006-2008 Action Plan for simplifying and improving the Common Fisheries Policy* (COM (2005)647), it was appropriate to take stock of what has been achieved to date, with a view to considering new initiatives and addressing possible shortcomings. It would also be the ideal occasion to consider what has been done at national level on simplification, since better regulation is a common goal of the Community and Member States. However, since the Commission services have received limited feedback from the Member States, it is currently not possible to report on their results.

This Plan was envisaged as a contribution to the initiative of the Commission aimed at simplifying the regulatory environment to the benefit of citizens, businesses and administrations. The Plan was examined and supported by the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Fisheries Council. The actions listed in the Plan were regularly supplemented by those inserted in the annual Commission's Simplification Rolling Programme (SRP), some of which related to fisheries. Member States have been informed through bi-annual progress-reports of actions taken in the fisheries sector under the better regulation agenda. The initiative was composed of actions aimed at achieving clearer legal texts, the reduction of administrative costs, enhancing the quality of the new initiatives and the streamlining of data transfer.

The Communication examines the screening of the body of the Community law relating to fisheries (the *acquis communautaire*); the main legislative initiatives adopted to date; the reduction of administrative burdens imposed on fishermen by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) rules. Furthermore, simplification goals will be kept in mind when drawing up the



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reformed Common Fisheries Policy, while the impact of procedural rules that the Lisbon Treaty will have on the legislative process, will also be taken into due consideration. The Commission encourages Member States to commit themselves to a simplified regulatory environment, by cancelling needless requirements established by domestic legislation and by promoting the resort to ICT.

Testing the Waters

11/06/2009

The Commission's annual report on bathing water quality says some 96% of beaches and 92% of rivers and lakes met the EU's minimum standards for cleanliness in 2008. Overall, the cleanest water was found in Cyprus (98.2%), Greece (97.7%), France (96.3%) and **Malta (94.3%)**. Five countries tested clean at more than 80% of sites: Italy, Finland, Sweden, Portugal and Germany. [Click here](#) to check out the Annual Reports.