



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



23.10.09

### Agriculture & Rural Development

Dairy crisis: EU extends intervention period for butter and skimmed milk powder - **20/10/2009**

EU agriculture ministers approved the Commission's proposal to extend the period for buying butter and skimmed milk powder into public intervention storage. This forms the latest part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to stabilise milk prices for dairy farmers.

Normally, intervention buying is limited to 30,000 tonnes of butter and 109,000 tonnes of SMP and is only open between 1 March and 31 August each year. The Commission has already bought butter and SMP well beyond these limits (so far, 83,000 tonnes of butter and 283,000 tonnes of SMP).

Now the Council agreed to extend the period for intervention until the end of February 2010 when the new intervention period begins. Purchases beyond the normal limits are carried out through a tendering procedure.

Rural development: first wave of approvals of national/regional proposals for using funding from CAP Health Check and European Economic Recovery Plan – **22/10/2009**

The Rural Development Committee approved a first wave of proposals from Member States/regions for using fresh European Union funding for rural development. The Member States/regions in question have proposed amendments to their Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) to make use of extra funding provided by the Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy and the European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP), agreed in November 2008. The extra funding in question totals € 4.4 billion for the EU as a whole and must be spent through RDPs in the period 2009 to 2013. Member States/regions choose the priorities on which to spend their funding from a list which includes climate change, restructuring of the



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dairy sector and broadband for rural areas, water management, biodiversity and innovation linked with the mentioned priorities. [Click here](#) for more info

**[COM \(2009\) 547](#)** – Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council 2nd financial report on the financial implementation of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Year 2008

This is the 2nd financial report on the financial implementation of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Year 2008. Click on the above hyperlink to view the full Report in detail

## **Fisheries**

**[COM \(2009\) 541](#)** - Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture

Under certain conditions movements of alien or locally absent species for use in well-defined and bio secure closed aquaculture facilities can be considered of low and acceptable risk and can thus be exempted from the permit procedure. The objective of this proposal is to make the necessary technical changes to the definition of 'closed aquaculture facility' in order to exempt introductions and translocations for use in such facilities from the permit requirement of Chapter III of Council Regulation 708/2007. The aim is to remove red tape while ensuring adequate environmental protection in the use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture.

**[COM \(2009\) 556](#)** - Proposal for a Council Decision on the signing, on behalf of the European Community, of the Agreement on Port State measures to prevent, deter, and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU fishing)

At the 2007 meeting of the FAO Committee for Fisheries, it was agreed that an international legally binding instrument on Port State measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing should be elaborated. An expert consultation on this issue took place in Washington in September 2007.

In June 2008, the Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to conduct negotiations for the elaboration of such an instrument on behalf of the European Community. FAO has subsequently held four technical consultations, open to all FAO Parties, with the aim of finalizing the draft international instrument on Port State measures. During its fourth session, held in Rome from 24-28 August 2009, Parties reached a tentative agreement on a draft text.



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The text has subsequently been reviewed by an editorial review group. This text will now be submitted to the relevant FAO bodies with a view of having it adopted at the 36<sup>th</sup> Conference of FAO in Rome from 18-23 November 2009, at which time it is planned to be made open for signature.

Port State measures have been identified as a key tool in the fight of the international community against IUU fishing. This resulted in particular in the adoption in 2005 by the FAO of the Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing. This Model Scheme provides for minimum standards which should underpin the adoption of measures by States in order to monitor, control and inspect foreign-flagged fishing vessels wishing to use their harbours. It is a voluntary and non-binding instrument.

In addition, some Regional Fisheries Management Organisations have put in place binding Port State mechanisms which shall be applied by Parties to these Organisations in order to monitor the legality of landing, transshipment and other operations in their ports. Specific rules have also been enacted in some Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) aiming to deny port access to vessels listed by the organisation as having engaged or supported IUU fishing activities. The Community is a member of the FAO as well as of 13 RFMOs. Port State mechanisms adopted within RFMOs have been implemented into Community law. Community law also provides for general rules applying to the landing of fisheries products by third country vessels in Community ports. The fight against IUU fishing constitutes an essential component of the Common Fisheries Policy and the Community should be able to foster international cooperation on this matter by participating actively and constructively in the adoption of an international instrument on Port State measures.

The Community has participated in this process from the start and has played an active and constructive role in the drafting of the Agreement.

### **Commissioner Borg on the withdrawal of the Commission's proposal for Fisheries agreement with Guinea – 20/10/2009**

Commissioner Borg would be asking the Commission to initiate the necessary procedures to withdraw the proposal to adopt the current Fisheries Partnership Agreement and Protocol with Guinea. In the current uncertain context there is no doubt that it would be politically unacceptable for the Commission to proceed with a financial transfer to Guinea.

The European Union has decided to pursue consultations with Guinea under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement and within this framework has suspended its development assistance to Guinea until such time as there is a satisfactory resolution to the crisis. Any humanitarian aid



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assistance, which is strictly non-political and provided on a needs basis, remains unaffected.  
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### **Other news**

#### Two agricultural product names registered - **22/10/2009**

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):

- British fish "Traditional Grimsby Smoked Fish" (PGI);
- Hungarian radish "Hajdúsági torma" (PDO);

The two names are added to the list of about 850 product names already protected under the legislation on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin and traditional speciality.

### **Agriculture and Fisheries Council Conclusions**

19/10/2009

The Council reached political agreement on Common Fisheries Policy Controls and on Total Allowable Catches in the Baltic Sea.

The Council adopted a regulation extending the intervention period for butter and skimmed milk powder and had a comprehensive exchange of views on the dairy market situation with a view to adopt further measures next month.

The Council adopted a regulation modifying the current marketing standards for poultry meat.

The Council concluded its proceedings on three genetically modified maize varieties.

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