



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

# AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



**30.04.09**

## Agriculture and Rural Development

European Commission launches competition to create a new EU organic logo-  
27/04/2009

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development is inviting all design and art students from the 27 EU Member States to enter the EU-wide organic logo competition. The competition is offering a prize, whereby the winning logo will be introduced as the official logo for organic products throughout the European Union in July 2010. Mariann Fischer Boel, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, commented that the new organic logo will bring identity to the organic sector in the EU. It will help in creating the single market, and that will be good news for producers and consumers.

The new EU organic logo will be mandatory for all pre-packaged organic products that originate in the 27 Member States and meet the labelling standards. Additionally, all non pre-packaged organic products that originate from the EU or that are imported from third countries can use the EU logo on a voluntary basis.

For further details [click here](#)

Swine influenza in the United States and Mexico – 26/04/2009

European Food Safety Association (EFSA) is following the recent human cases of swine influenza notified to WHO by the United States and Mexico. EFSA is in close contact with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)



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and the European Commission and is ready to provide any further scientific advice which may be required.

Swine influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus. Influenza viruses affect the respiratory tract and the usual way of transmission of swine flu virus is through direct contact or close proximity with affected animals. Furthermore, diseases like the one due to Swine influenza virus A (N1H1) are of more concern because they could represent a global challenge, in particular because of the rapid and frequent international travels. That is why one has to be extremely prudent in assessing the current situation, in order to understand precisely the mechanism of transmission, to evaluate the potential danger to the health of citizens, and the resources to treat patients, such as vaccines and antivirals.

Experts in the WHO, ECDC and Member States are working together in order to clarify these points and they are sharing the information on a transparent and permanent basis. The Commission's consultation mechanism with all these structures and Institutions has been put rapidly in place and works very efficiently.

In the meantime, after the Council had an exchange of views on developments following an outbreak of swine flu centred in Mexico; the presidency announced that the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council would be convened for an extraordinary session on 30 April to take stock of the situation.

For more info [click here](#)

[International scientific agreement on validation of alternatives to animal testing – 27/04/2009](#)

Global efforts to promote alternatives to testing on animals receive a significant boost through the signing of a cooperation agreement by international bodies, including the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), tasked with the validation of alternative test methods.

A cooperation agreement that should give new impetus to the worldwide availability of scientifically proven alternatives to animal test methods has been signed by the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods



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(ECVAM), which is part of the Commission's Joint Research Centre, together with its equivalent in the US, Japan and Canada's Environmental Health Science and Research Bureau.

The European Commissioner for Science and Research commented that reducing animal testing are both of concern for animal welfare and ethical issues, and protecting consumer safety are the two major objectives of this international agreement. Moreover, Janez Potočnik stated that European, American, Japanese and Canadian scientists will more rapidly identify scientifically sound alternative testing methods.

For more info [click here](#)

### EFSA to assess the risks to human health from nicotine in wild mushrooms

EFSA has received an urgent request from the European Commission for a scientific opinion in relation to the risks for human health from nicotine in wild mushrooms. EFSA has been asked to provide this advice because food business operators have found dried wild mushrooms to be contaminated with nicotine. It is not known what caused the presence of the nicotine, but it could be the result of factors including its use in pesticides. EFSA aims to answer this request by 7 May 2009 and its response will then be published.

For further info [click here](#)

### EU budget 2010 targets recovery – 29/04/2009

On Wednesday the Commission today adopted a €139bn preliminary draft budget for 2010. Economic recovery is at the heart of next year's spending and the proposal channels the biggest share of funds (45%) into growth and employment measures – a 3.2% rise on 2009 – to help restore competitiveness across the Union. Funds for major programmes linked to research and energy will increase by more than 12% and cash for cohesion policy will grow too, with the EU-12 set to receive 52% of cohesion and Structural Funds. All headings in the budget will see an increase, reaching a total of €138.6bn in commitments (1.18% of GNI) and €122.3bn in payments (1.04% of GNI).



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Amongst the amounts allocated one can find a top slice of cohesion funds to go to EU – 12. As part of the €62bn set for jobs and competitiveness, €49bn will go towards cohesion in the EU-27. The trend to phase-in funding for the Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 (EU-12) is continuing. For the first time ever, the EU-12 will receive the biggest share of the EU's Cohesion and Structural Funds (52%). Agricultural support for these regions will also grow, making a real impact with the EU-12 now receiving nearly 20%, €11bn in agricultural support. Thanks to the CAP, the single market and higher market prices, farmers' income in the EU-12 is now 47% higher than before accession. Funding for natural resources in the EU-27 stands at €59bn and, as part of this, spending for environment and rural development will grow by nearly 2.5% to almost €15bn.

Add to this, a second phase of financing for the European Economic Recovery Plan. April 2009 saw the European Parliament, Council and Commission agree on the need for a fresh €5bn to finance major European projects in the areas of energy and broadband infrastructures and to face new challenges in rural areas linked to the CAP health check. Following the first injection of €2.6bn in 2009, a further €2.4bn in will be added to the 2010 budget, the source of the funds being decided later on in the 2010 budget procedure.

The final adoption of the EU budget will take place during the European Parliament plenary in December.

For further info [click here](#)

### **Bluefin Tuna Recovery Plan – Recreational fishing**

Bluefin tuna recreational and sport fishing shall only take place from the 16<sup>th</sup> June to the 14<sup>th</sup> October. Only 1 bluefin tuna can be landed per fishing trip and once the allocated quota of 50 kg has been used up, no further fishing by that fisher can take place. Minimum landing size for bluefin tuna landed by sport and recreational fishers is 30 kg. Severe penalties will be imposed upon those who do not abide by the stipulated conditions.

Letters of interest have to be submitted to the Veterinary Regulation, Fisheries Conservation and Control Division by the 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2009, att. Mr. Louis Fresta, VR FCC, Civil Abattoir, Albert Town, Marsa, Malta. Random selection of allocation will take place in the presence of officials from the Federation of Amateur Fishermen. Bluefin tuna caught by recreational fishermen cannot be marketed. This tuna can only be marketed if a written authorisation is obtained from the



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Director General, Veterinary Regulation Fisheries Conservation and Control and the proceeds have to go towards charitable institutions.