EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Brussels,
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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 26 APRIL 2013 (Section Genetically modified Food & Feed)

Chairmen: Dorothee Andre (all the points except A1)

Celine Valero (point A1)

25 Member States were present. Portugal was absent and represented by The Netherlands, Lithuania was absent and represented by Latvia.

A.1 Proposed operational changes to sampling and testing protocol for Canadian flaxseed exported to the European Union – presentation and discussion.

The Commission representative informed the Committee Members that the Canadian competent authorities had requested an amendment to the protocol, which would transfer responsibility for sampling and testing flaxseed for export to the EU from the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) to the grain handling operators. It was further explained that the grain handling operators would implement the CGC guidance on sampling, but that the CGC would still be responsible for certifying exports to the EU. Committee Members agreed to the proposed amendment and so the amended protocol comes into immediate effect.

A.2 Presentation of the European Coexistence Bureau: Best Practice Document for coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming – Coexistence of genetically modified maize and honey production.

In 2010, the European Coexistence Bureau published a Best Practice Document on maize coexistence. Beekeeping was not considered at that time. Following the proposal of the Commission from September 2012 for amendment of the Honey Directive 2001/110/EC, the coexistence between GM maize cultivation and conventional or organic agriculture in the EU was studied. The Technical working group concluded that no changes in the Best Practice document of 2010 were necessary and that the current practices in honey production and marketing in Europe are sufficient to ensure that adventitious presence of GM maize pollen in honey is below legal labelling thresholds and even below 0.1 %. A number of Committee Members agreed to forward comments on the document.

B.1 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision 2011/884/EU on emergency measures regarding unauthorised genetically modified rice in rice products originating from China.

The Commission representative presented a proposal to amend the current measures regarding unauthorised GM rice products originating from China. The key element of this amendment is to extend the scope of the Decision to include the possibility to test any food or feed product which may contain rice. The Decision also defines a new common protocol for sampling and analysis of processed products. To further facilitate controls it now requires operators to complete a Common Entry Document (CED). The representative indicated that the objectives of these changes was to reinforce and improve the efficiency of official controls concerning rice products originating or consigned from China.

The Commission representatives addressed the questions raised by Member States and the additional comments which had been forwarded during the consultation period.

Following the discussion an amended proposal was presented to the Committee for an opinion.

Vote taken: qualified majority by 335 votes in favour, 10 votes against.

B.2 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision authorising the placing on the market of food containing, consisting of, or food and feed produced from genetically modified oilseed rape Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8 x Rf3 (ACS-BNØØ5-8, ACS-BNØØ3-6 and ACS-BNØØ5-8 x ACS-BNØØ3-6) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The draft Commission Implementing Decision authorising the placing on the market of food containing, consisting of, or food and feed produced from genetically modified oilseed rape Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8 x Rf3 (ACS-BNØØ5-8, ACS-BNØØ3-6 and ACS-BNØØ5-8 x ACS-BNØØ3-6) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council was presented and submitted to the Committee for an opinion.

The following reasons were mentioned by Member States for not supporting the draft Decision:

- Lack of 90-day feeding study;
- Risk assessment deemed not sufficient;
- Potential risk of spillage;
- Precautionary principle;
- Risk assessment on potential synergistic effects between the 2 events deemed insufficient;

•National environmental risk assessment not finalised;

•Political reasons;

•Negative public opinion.

The Chair indicated that the Commission will submit a proposal to the Appeal Committee in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.

Vote taken: no opinion by 161 votes in favour, 87 votes against and 97 votes abstention.

M.1 Miscellaneous

The Commission representative informed that the newly adopted Implementing Regulation on applications for authorisation of GM food and feed will be published with a delay due to problems with the translation in some languages.

The Commission representative informed that 21 responses have been received to the questionnaire of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in relation to the study on the trade-disruption due to low level presence of non-authorised GMOs. The responses have been sent to the responsible secretariat of the FAO.

The Commission representative informed of its intentions to coordinate the EU position on certain issues where EU legislation exists for the next year's OECD meetings.

In relation to the inconclusive EFSA opinion on 98140 GAT maize, the Commission representative informed that the applicant announced its intentions to withdraw the application due to the lack of commercial interest in the product.

The Commission representative informed SCFCAH members on the requests from Italy and Hungary to introduce emergency measures on the genetically modified maize MON810 pursuant to Article 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003. The Commission has analysed the requests and for the moment does not see an urgent need to take emergency measures. The scientific argumentation provided by Italy has been sent to EFSA for evaluation.