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 13 SEPTEMBER 2013 (Section Genetically modified Food & Feed)

24 Member States were present, Cyprus was represented by Greece, Poland was represented by Belgium, Slovakia was represented by Czech Republic, Portugal submitted a written vote.

A.1 European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) opinion on application for the placing on the market of insect-resistant and herbicide-tolerant genetically modified cotton T304-40 for food and feed uses, import and processing under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003

Item has been postponed to 11 October.

A.2 Update on the genetically modified glyphosate resistant wheat in USA

A Commission representative presented the latest update published on 29 July [1] by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the on-going investigations regarding the detection of the glyphosate resistant wheat volunteers in a single farm in the US state of Oregon in spring 2013.

One Member State stressed that the answers provided in writing by USDA following the discussion at the SCFCAH meeting of 10 June were incomplete. The Chair invited the Member States to review the USDA's answers and send any additional request for clarification or information to the Commission, who will forward them to the USDA.

[1] http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/2013/07/ge_wheat_update.shtml

A.3 Update on the recent Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) notifications on genetically modified papaya – Thailand

A Commission representative informed the Committee members about repeated notifications under RASFF since April 2012 on detection of unauthorised GM papaya originating from Thailand and reported on the correspondence and discussions with the Thai authorities in the recent months, where they answered to the concerns expressed by the Commission by describing the current control system, surveillance data and proposed future control measures for export of fresh and preserved papaya to the EU.

The EU-RL examined the detection methods used by the Thai authorities for issuance of the Health Certificate and considered them appropriate.

The Commission informed the Member States that the scope of an FVO mission to Thailand on pesticides planned in early 2014 will be extended to GM papaya; asked those Member States having detected GM papayas to highlight the frequencies of positives compared to the total number of controls; and proposed to examine the evolution of RASFF notification in November and the need to take protective measures.

Concerning other RASFF on GMOs, a Commission representative informed that since the last SCFCSH meeting on 10 June, 8 alerts on GMOs were submitted (7 on rice and 1 on maize).

A.4 Information on the modification of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls

A Commission representative presented the draft Regulation, reviewing in particular Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls. There was a discussion on the potential impacts of the proposed changes on controls carried out to verify the compliance with GMO legislation. The Commission representative indicated that the proposal is being discussed in the Council and the Parliament and that Member States' comments should be brought up in that forum.

B.1 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of, or produced from genetically modified maize MON 87460 (MON 8746Ø-4) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council

The Commission representative presented the draft Commission Implementing Decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of, or produced from genetically modified maize MON 87460 (MON 8746Ø-4) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Following the discussion a vote took place.

Reasons for abstention or negative vote given by Member States:

- •Political reasons and negative public opinion;
- •Precautionary approach to food and feed approvals;
- •No sufficient time to prepare National position;
- •Presence of the antibiotic resistance marker gene;
- •The Regulation on GM food and feed is not considered as the right legal basis to authorise products other than food and feed containing and consisting of GMOs;
- • EFSA opinion is not considered fully satisfactory;
- •General surveillance not considered satisfactory.

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 (154 votes in favour, 152 votes against, 46 abstentions).

M.1 Two-year feeding study with Genetically Modified maize

A representative of the Commission informed that on 31 July 2013 EFSA published a scientific report on the applicability of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Test Guideline 453 for the carcinogenicity and chronic toxicity testing of chemicals to whole food/feed testing, following a mandate from the Commission.

This EFSA report should be used by the contractor of the project "Two-year carcinogenicity rat feeding study with maize NK603" under the Seventh Framework Programme Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnologies. The call was published on 29 June 2013 and the deadline for submission is 1 October 2013.

M.2 In June 2013 The European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) published the report Planting the Future: opportunities and challenges for using crop genetic improvement technologies for sustainable agriculture. A representative of the Commission explained that a number of the recommendations resonate with those outlined in previous reports including the GMO Evaluation (2011) and that the Commission has made progress and continues to work towards addressing these issues.

M.3 GM-free labelling

A representative of the Commission informed the Member States that the exploratory study on GM-free labelling is expected to be published in the coming weeks. Two Member States expressed strong interest in the findings of this study.

M.4 Draft Commission Implementing Regulation on detailed rules for the implementation of Article 32 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003

A representative of the Commission recalled the Member States that proposals for amendments to the current list of national reference laboratories as established in Annex II of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1981/2006 should be sent to the Commission. The draft Commission Implementing Regulation would then be presented to the Member States for discussion and possible vote during the next SCFCAH meeting.

M.5 Meeting under Directive 2001/18/EC

A representative of the Commission informed that the next meeting of the Regulatory Committee would be held on 10 October 2013 (in the meantime rescheduled in November 2013).

M.6 Low Level Presence of unauthorised GMOs

The Chair reminded that in accordance with article 6.2 of Regulation (EU) No 619/2011 Member States shall notify the Commission and other member States by 30 June of each year about the results of analytical tests indicating the presence of GM material below the MRPL.

The Chair informed the Member States that the exploratory study aiming at collecting data in advance to the start of an Impact Assessment on LLP in Food should be launched early 2014.

A representative of the Commission informed the Member States about a meeting of the Global LLP Initiative (GLI – set up by several third countries to develop practical approaches to address LLP globaly) on 18-20 September in Durban, to which the Commission would participate as an observer.

M.7 GM Food Platform

A representative of the Commission informed the Member States about the plan by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to organise a technical consultation on Low Levels of GM crops in international food and feed trade early 2014. This proposal would be discussed at the FAO plenary Council in December, thus European coordination would be needed ahead.

M.8 A representative of the Commission presented the state of play of the pending authorisations under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 and updated on the next steps after the recent adoption of two inconclusive opinions by EFSA.