



THE HOLIDAYS ISSUE
SEE BACK COVER

Health & Consumer Voice

July/August 2011

Headline News

Food labelling finally a reality! _____ 1

Top Stories

Commission proposes new legislation for specialised foods _____ 2

Commission extends ban on novelty cigarette lighters to May 2012 _____ 2

New video: fight against fake medicines _____ 2

E-coli update: EU keeps monitoring the situation closely _____ 3

Commission acts to protect Member States from tapeworm _____ 3

In brief

Commission proposes new financial framework for 2014-2020 _____ 2

EP news

GMO cultivaton: first step towards new rules _____ 3

Holidays Issue

Holiday trouble? The European Consumer Centre can sort it out! _____ 4

Don't forget your health card! _____ 4

Emergency? Dial 112 _____ 4

EU Presidency

Poland takes over EU presidency _____ 4

Single Market Forum _____ 4

Follow us on Twitter!

http://twitter.com/#!/EU_Consumer



Food labelling finally a reality!

After four years of discussions, food labeling information is set to become simple, clear and more transparent following the agreement on the new EU legislation reached on 6th July.

The new rules will give consumers access to better information and help in the fight against obesity and other chronic diseases.

They make nutritional labelling mandatory for the first time for nearly all pre-packed processed foods. Labels must indicate the content of: energy, fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt per 100g or 100ml.

This information must be presented clearly and legibly, usually in a table, and it will have a specified minimum font size.

Moreover, consumers will get more information on the country of origin of their food. Compulsory origin labelling, which already applies to beef, honey, olive oil and fresh fruit and vegetables in the EU, will be extended to include fresh meat from pigs, sheep, goats and poultry. The



Commissioner for Health & Consumer Policy, John Dalli and MEP Dr. Renate Sommer at the Press Conference following the EP vote (Source: EPP Press Service)

new rules also allow producers to provide further information on the origin of their products according to specific criteria.

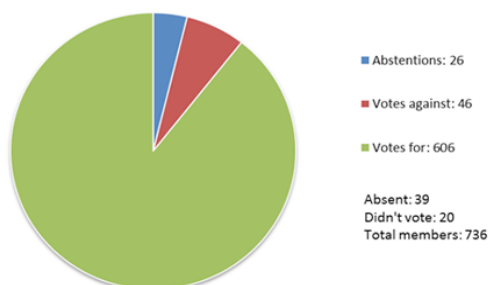
Eventually, the new rules will reduce the amount of misleading information on labels. The labelling principles will ensure that any substitute ingredients are clearly identified and that food labels do not indicate false origins.

The European Parliament voted - at its plenary meeting on 6th July 2011 - by a vast majority in favour of the new rules.

On the occasion of the vote, EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy John Dalli stated: "We are not telling people what to eat but what they are eating. We are giving them the opportunity to make better, more informed and hopefully healthier choices".

John Dalli

Food information to consumers - vote in EP



Want to know more? See:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm



In brief



Commission proposes new EU financial framework for 2014-2020

Proposals for a new multi-annual financial framework for the EU for 2014 to 2020 were presented by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso at the European Parliament on 29 June. Calling it "at once ambitious and innovative, responsible and rigorous," Barroso outlined four key priorities: boosting economic growth, a safer Europe, making Europe count in the world and a fairer, more transparent budget.

Proposed budget for Health and Consumers

Total budget 2014-2020: €2.75 billion

of which:

Food safety	€2.2 billion
Health for Growth Programme	€396 million
Consumers programme	€175 million

For health and consumer policy, three key strategies are proposed. First, a new "Health for Growth Programme" under which the EU and Member States would work together to address cross-border health threats, improve health services and encourage innovation in health.

Secondly, an animal, plant health and food safety priority should focus on the eradication of animal diseases, training programmes and vaccine banks as well as the emergency veterinary fund and the EU Reference Laboratories.

Finally, a new consumers' programme is proposed to promote consumer empowerment.

Discussions on the Commission's proposals will take place later this year.

For more information, visit the website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform>

Commission proposes new legislation for specialised foods

The European Commission proposed rules on foods for consumers with specific nutritional needs – i.e. infants under the age of three and people with particular medical conditions. These so-called "specialised" foods consist mostly of infant and baby formula, food for medical purposes e.g. diabetes patients, young children cereal-based food etc.

The proposal, which would replace the concept of "dietetic foods" with a general legal framework, would provide clear marketing guidelines at EU level for food producers who reach out to people with certain dietary requirements.

The proposal would establish a single measure for substances that can

be added to specialised foods, and it would lay down general EU rules on the composition and labelling of such foods. "Nowhere is clear information more essential than for foods intended for vulnerable groups", said Commissioner John Dalli. "This proposal will ensure just that. Good news for consumers and good news for manufacturers who will be able to play by a single set of rules".

The proposal is now being examined by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the 27 Member States. It is hoped that the legislation could be implemented by the end of 2012.

For more information, see:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/nutritional/index_en.htm

Commission extends ban on novelty lighters to May 2012



Novelty and other cigarette lighters, which are not child resistant, have been banned on the EU market for another

year in a continued effort to protect children. Meanwhile, the European Commission has called on the European Committee for Standardisation to develop a child resistance test for lighters.

New video: fight against fake medicines



As part of its ongoing campaign against fake medicines, the European Commission has published a new video in which Commissioner John Dalli explains the problem of fake medicines and the wide range of actions taken at EU level to protect European citizens.

For more information, visit the website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/videos>

Don't forget you can get up-to-date news and information on all Health and Consumer Affairs issues on the DG Health and Consumers website:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm



E. coli update: EU keeps monitoring situation closely

The outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* bacteria (STEC), first identified in Germany in May, is monitored closely by the EU. Meetings between officials from the EU, national authorities and relevant EU scientific bodies take place on a daily basis as part of the ongoing co-ordinated response to contain the outbreak and keep the public up to date with latest developments.

Over 4000 cases of the rare STEC 0104 strain of *E. coli* have now been reported across the EU, of which the majority in Germany (with a recent small cluster of cases in France).

Epidemiological investigations have now traced the infection back to Fenugreek seeds imported from Egypt, prompting emergency measures in force since 6th July. As a consequence, all Fenugreek seeds imported

Temporary ban on seed and bean imports from Egypt has been imposed

from Egypt between 2009 and 2011 are being withdrawn from the EU market and a temporary ban on seed and bean imports from Egypt has also been imposed. These import restrictions will remain in place until 31st October 2011.

Russia lifts ban on EU vegetable exports

In the meantime, trade restrictions on EU vegetables imposed by the Russian Federation following the *E. coli* outbreak were lifted on 22nd June, following the meetings between the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso and the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev.

The situation is constantly monitored. Up-to-date information can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/coli_outbreak_germany_en.htm#tritional/index_en.htm

Commission acts to protect Member States from tapeworm

A new regulation permitting the pre-movement treatment of dogs travelling to listed Member States claiming *Echinococcus* (tapeworm) free status will apply from 1 January 2012, following its adoption by the Commission on 14 July.

Before travel to one of the four Member States currently listed – Finland, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom – dogs will have to receive a specific treatment administered by a vet which must be documented in the animal's passport. The animal will then be able to travel from 24 hours to five days after the treatment.

To appear on the list of *Echinococcus* free countries, Member States must introduce surveillance programmes

and report the findings to the Commission once a year. Any positive findings

should be communicated immediately however.

Typically, transmission of *Echinococcus multilocularis* occurs when an infected rodent is eaten by a dog. It is found throughout the northern hemisphere but has never been recorded in certain parts of the EU.



For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/index_en.htm

EP news



GMO cultivation: first steps towards new rules

In the first reading, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voted favourably on the new rules allowing EU governments to restrict or prohibit the growth of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) on their territories.

In the future, economic, environmental and regional planning considerations could all be used to justify a partial or a complete ban of GMO cultivation in Member States, said rapporteur MEP Corinne Lepage (ALDE). "The diversity of ecosystems and European agricultural practices means Member States should be able to legitimately prohibit cultivation of GMOs on their territories".

The importance of subsidiarity, or certain flexibility for Member States to implement the regulations, was a point picked up by MEPs from all political groups. Underlining that whilst it was necessary to strengthen the EU's legal basis for GMO cultivation, they agreed it should be up to the Member States to adapt the rules to objective national or regional criteria, in particular for co-existence measures.

Commissioner John Dalli reminded that it is "necessary to double our common efforts to find a common ground to accommodate those who want to cultivate GMOs and those who wish to restrict or prohibit it". Discussions will continue.

Further information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant>

Holiday trouble? The European Consumer Centre can sort it out!

Holiday didn't go as planned? Lost luggage? Cancelled flight? The European Consumer Centre (ECC) can help you, providing free support and advice on citizens' rights when travelling or shopping abroad. In 2010 alone, the ECC handled over 70 000 files, providing advice on a range of issues from mobile phone roaming charges, shopping online to claiming money back for cancelled flights.

On top of the practical information it gives, the ECC also helps consumers who want to obtain a refund or a compensation from an airline company. If necessary, the ECC can also file a complaint with the National



Director-General for Health & Consumers, Paola Testori-Coggi together with the Belgian Minister for Economy and Reform, Vincent Quickenborne, launched an awareness campaign with passengers and the ECC of Belgium at Zaventem airport on 7th July 2011

Enforcement Body responsible for ensuring air passenger rights are complied with.

You will find an ECC in all 27 EU Member States, as well as in Iceland and Norway. The centres are co-funded by the European Commission and national authorities.

For more information visit:
<http://ec.europa.eu/ecc-net>



Emergency? Dial 112



Need police, medical assistance or the fire service? 112 is the European emergency services number, reachable from fixed and mobile phones anywhere in the EU, free of charge.

For more information visit:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/112

If you're off on holiday or just going away more generally this summer, don't forget your European Health Care Card. It's free and it gives you access to health care services in all EU Member States, as well as those in Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. For more details, contact your local health authority.



For more information visit:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=509&langId=en>

Last word: use your sunscreen correctly



Sunscreen products are fully effective only if used in sufficient quantity. To protect the whole body of an average-sized adult, 35 grams of sunscreen needs to be applied. This is

equal to approximately six filled tea spoons. Currently, consumers usually use only half this quantity, reducing protection by more than half.

For more information visit:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/citizen/my_holidays/sunscreens_en.htm

EU Presidency



Poland takes over EU presidency

On 1st July, Poland took over the six month rotating presidency of the European Council. Poland focuses its priorities on: enforcing the Eastern Partnership, developing energy security, closing the health gap in Europe's societies, and making progress on the EU plant health strategy and the animal transport legislation. The European Competition and Consumer Day is also planned.

For full details of its work programme and agenda, visit: <http://pl2011.eu/>



Single Market Forum

Would you like to join the debate on the future of the single market? Sign up for the Single Market Forum taking place in Krakow, Poland 2nd-4th October 2011. Bringing together businesses, social partners, non-governmental organisations and public authorities at various levels, it will examine the state of the single market and possible improvements that could be made.

Over 1000 stakeholders are expected to share their experiences and ideas, led by the European Parliament, the Polish government and the European Commission.

For more details, visit the website:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/top_layer/single_market_forum_en.htm



The views expressed in Health & Consumer Voice do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the European Commission.
© European Union, 2011. Reproduction of articles (excluding photographs) is authorised, except for commercial purposes, provided that the source is mentioned.
Chief Editor: Eric Thévenard.

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm
Email: sanco-newsletter@ec.europa.eu