



Health Check

Although not official yet, the European Commission prepared a first draft of legislative proposals on the Health Check.

For the dairy sector the most relevant issues included in the set of draft proposals is the 1% annual increase of the milk quota, starting in the 2010/2011 quota year, until 2013/2014 (so 4 times a 1% increase). This proposed increase is unrelated from the 2% increase that is expected to enter into force already in April this year (after approval at the 17 - 18 March Agricultural Council meeting). The draft proposal also includes a provision that the Commission will present, before the end of 2012, a report to the European Parliament and the Council on other possible measures to be taken to further ease a soft landing such as; further quota increases and/or reduction of the super levy, and will propose such measures if necessary. As regards the sensitive issue of less favoured areas, financial support for producers that are affected by the quota abolition will be provided under article 69.

Besides the quota issue, the following proposals could have a significant impact on the dairy sector:

- § As regards the intervention schemes, a tendering system will be applied to butter and SMP.
- § The private storage aid for cheeses will be abolished.
- § The aid for butter for pastry and ice cream and for direct consumption will be abolished.

Other points that are taken on board by the Commission in the draft legislative proposals include the single payment scheme, modulation, degressivity of the aid and minimum level of support. The draft proposals, that can still be changed, are currently under inter-service consultation and will be published on the 20th of May.

EFSA Scientific Opinion on Nutrient Profiles for Claims

At a press conference organised in Brussels on 26th February, EFSA presented its long awaited scientific opinion on nutrient profiles for the use of nutrition and health claims. Following dietary guidelines in EU Member States, EFSA confirms that dairy products have an important role in the diets of the European population (important contributor of calcium, protein, vitamins, and minerals). Exemptions from the general profile could be established for a limited number of food groups (incl. dairy), either by total exemption or by specific profiles with different nutrients, thresholds or scores.

Based on the imbalance between dietary recommendations and actual intakes of energy and certain nutrients, EFSA recommends including saturated fatty acids, sodium, dietary fibre and unsaturated fatty acids in the profiles based on their public health importance for EU populations. *Trans* fatty acids might be included for some food groups but are of decreasing public health importance due to declined intake in the EU.

White Paper on Nutrition and Overweight

The European Parliament is currently discussing its response to the Commission's White Paper on nutrition and overweight. The draft opinion prepared by Italian MEP Poli-Bortone calls for active involvement of all stakeholders and takes a quite balanced approach covering different areas. However, she also calls for some drastic measures such as banning sales of foods and beverages high in fat, salt or sugars in schools, restricting advertising of 'unhealthy food' to children and banning TFA. EDA and its members are active to inform MEPs about natural TFA occurring in dairy and the need to make a distinction between the sources based on scientific evidence showing no negative effects of dairy TFA.