

Food Safety

October 2009

The United States and the EU share a strong commitment to ensuring the safety of food consumed by their citizens. An official from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) joined the staff of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a two-year period effective September 1, to further facilitate exchange of scientific information and regulatory cooperation. Based on more intense contacts between the U.S.-EU Animal Health Technical Working Group (AHTWG) and the U.S.-EU Plant Health Technical Working Group (PHTWG) at the technical level, an expert meeting is scheduled along with the Joint Management Committee (JMC) of the US-EU Veterinary Equivalency Agreement, for late 2009 or early 2010.

December 2008

At the May 13, 2008 TEC meeting, the European Commission committed to propose, before the EU-U.S. Summit of June 2008, changes to EU regulations that will allow the use of pathogen reduction treatments for poultry meat in the EU Member States and in imported poultry products. In line with its previous commitments in this area, and following the receipt of opinions from the Scientific Committee on Health and Environment and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks, the Commission committed to actively solicit Member State and European Parliament support and to make best endeavours to achieve the final adoption of the relevant EU legislation before the next TEC meeting. The Commission adopted its proposal on May 28, 2008. However, in communications to the EU TEC co-chair in May and November 2008, the U.S. TEC co-chair stated that the proposal does not address the U.S. concerns because it includes conditions that would deny U.S. producers access to the EU market. At the meeting of the Regulatory Committee on June 2, 2008, the Member States' experts unanimously rejected the Commission proposal. The European Parliament also expressed opposition to any modification of the status quo. Subsequently, the Commission submitted the proposal to the Council. The Council Presidency has drafted a Council Decision rejecting the proposal, which is due to be put before the next Agriculture Council. On the assumption that the Agriculture Council will reject the Commission proposal, the United States encourages the two sides to work together on a new proposal.

May 2008

At the TEC meeting in November 2007, the subject of the treatment of poultry meat with pathogen reduction substances was discussed. The European Commission has undertaken to act on this issue before the next EU-U.S. Summit, after receiving scientific advice. In this sense, the Commission consulted the European Food Safety Authority on the possible effects of the treatment on antimicrobial resistance and the Scientific Committee on Health and Environment and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks on the environmental risk and on the risk of emergence of microbial resistance associated with the use of these substances. The Commission has reviewed these scientific opinions and, in the light of those opinions, which provide no scientific basis for the continuation of the import ban, it will in the coming weeks come forward with a proposal for allowing the use of pathogen reduction treatments for poultry meat in the EU Member States and in imported poultry products. In line with its previous commitment, the Commission will actively solicit Member State and European

Parliament support and will make best endeavours to achieve the final adoption of the relevant EU legislation before the next TEC meeting, planned for autumn 2008.

The European Commission and the U.S. government will seek to intensify their cooperation on agriculture, sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, and food safety, and the TEC will review the state of progress at its next meeting.

November 2007

The European Commission and the United States Government express their strong willingness to resolve the issue of pathogen reduction treatments for poultry carcasses. The Commission has taken first steps towards a solution by requesting advice from the relevant scientific committees. The European Commission is committed to making a proposal for definitively resolving this long-standing issue before the next U.S.-EU Summit, after receiving the scientific advice.