

❖ The meeting was chaired by Dr. BENVENUTI

1. Approval of the agenda and the minutes of the meeting held on 25/06/2013

The agenda and the minutes were approved without further comments. A representative from CELCAA requested, following the minutes of the last meeting to have an overview of the state of play of the proposal for a regulation on official controls and the discussion on geographical indication protection for non-agricultural products during any other business. Both points were in the agenda of the last meeting.

2. Regulation №1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs:

a) "Mountain product": State of play of the Delegated act on application of the optional quality term "mountain product"

- The Representative of the **European Commission** informed about the state of play of the delegated act on application of the optional quality term “mountain product” (article 31 of Regulation 1151/2012). Following the procedure, they have worked and discussed with experts from Member States. This expert group met three times (January, April and May) and discussed the content of the draft delegated act.

Compared to the presentation of the last meeting of the Advisory Group in June 2013, the Commission has only changed two issues of the draft that were briefly presented:

- Requirements for feedstuffs: the new version of the draft lays down that in the case of feedstuffs that cannot be produced in mountain areas, they shall not exceed the 40% in the case of ruminants instead of one third as it was foreseen in the previous draft. It means that the share of mountain feed for ruminants should be 60%.
- Regarding processing: the current version says that the processing operations for the production of dairy products (in the previous draft it was only applicable for milk and cream), slaughtering, deboning and cutting of meat and pressing of olive oil may take place within an area of 30 Km outside of the mountain areas. Member States are allowed to limit the use of these derogations.

It was explained that these changes follow requests from Member States. The Interservice Consultation was already launched and when the draft text is finalized, it will be sent to Geneva (WTO – Technical barriers to trade) for comments.

- The chair thanked the COM Representative for the presentation and opened the floor for eventual questions/comments:

- Representative from **CELCAA** made a question regarding the processing derogation in the case of the dairy sector. It was asked if Member States could be stricter and propose stricter rules.

- **Euromontana** stressed its concerns about the draft. They have presented a draft proposal to the European Commission. They consider that it should have been taken into account. Over the years, the creation of a tool to promote mountain farming has been welcomed by Euromontana, nevertheless, they are disappointed with the current draft. In the case of processing, the systematic derogation of 30 Km is going to have bad effects, i.e. in the case of Italy you can have mountain cheese in Milan with this derogation but also in other areas in Europe. It represents a lost battle for producers. Added value will be lost. Consumers will buy cheese produced very far from the mountains. More reflection was requested from the Commission.

- **Copa-Cogeca** expressed its support to the intervention of Euromontana. The Commission needs to reflect more on this draft. Derogations should be revised in order to ensure that the values of mountain food supply chains are

enhanced. If the current draft goes forward, there is a risk for some countries. Regarding the derogations for feedstuffs, it was underlined that the draft is still too restrictive and it was stressed the importance to consider a derogation for the feedstuffs for pigs. It was also stressed the need to protect mountain areas and the importance to ensure that existing national systems (e.g. French legislation) are not adversely affected by this. In some Mediterranean countries, due to the droughts it will not be possible to reach the limit of the 60% and there should be exceptional measures. The current draft could benefit from further improvement.

- Representative from **Arepo** also supported the Euromontana's position where other actors were also involved.
- Representative of the **workers** supported the criticism previously raised. It is essential to safeguard the rural areas in the mountains and employments have to be maintained in order to avoid that people leave these areas.
- Representative from **FoodDrinkEurope** underlined that geographical conditions are different depending on the country and the derogation foreseen by the Commission is correct in that sense.
- Representative from **BEUC** also supported the intervention of Euromontana. The Commission should reflect on this distance of 30 Km in order to make sure that the cheese comes from the mountains.
- After the interventions, the **Commission** explained that regarding the requirements, Member States cannot apply stricter rules than those in the basic act and in the delegated act, when in force. In the case of processing, in several Member States, the processing facilities do not exist in the mountain areas in sufficient quantities in order to process the raw material. Member States that consider that they need to go beyond mountain areas can use the derogation of processing within 30 Km outside mountain areas.

With regard to the derogations for processing, the Article in the draft delegated act provides flexibility regarding the type of activities and Member States can also limit this derogation. This derogation applies to three types of activities and Member States can decide for example that this derogation shall not apply for all dairy products but for some. The derogation applies to the three activities (slaughtering, processing of milk and dairy products and olive oil) up to 30 Km but Member States can decide on a shorter distance and apply this depending of the three activities.

Regarding the derogation of the sixty percent of mountain feed for ruminants and the difficulties of droughts the Commission considers that the derogation proposed is appropriate to cover different situations across the Member States. This comes from the study of the JRC where the situation was analysed in the different Member States.

It was also mentioned that regarding consumer protection, the proposal has to be coherent not only with the 30 km distance but also regarding the feedstuffs that come "essentially" from mountain areas. Even if some would claim that the feed does not have an influence on the quality of the meat, introducing 0% requirement for mountain feed would be misleading for consumers. Also legally speaking it seems not feasible because the regulation stipulates that feed has to come essentially from mountain areas. The Commission is just following what the Parliament and Council say in the basic regulation.

- **Euromontana** stressed that the requirements of the Commission are not consistent and are likely to lead to confusion. The requirements for feedstuffs are very strict but, nevertheless the derogations for processing are flexible, leading to weakening traditional mountain food supply chains by allowing a movement to the lowland areas. The requirement for non-ruminants and in particular, the pig production, cannot be complied with by any pig farmer.

-**Copa-Cogeca** underlined that the derogation for feedstuffs is strict because although there is an interest from producers to use feed from the mountains, in some cases it is not possible due to climate conditions or events. It is important to make sure that workers stay in the mountains, to protect the added value of these rural areas.

- The **Commission** reminded that the basic regulation is applying since January 2013. It means that now, the optional quality term "mountain product" can only be used if the criteria of article 31 are met. The Commission is not obliged to adopt this delegated act.

- It was asked if once the delegated act is adopted, Member States have to adopt derogations. It was also requested to clarify the definition of mountain areas.
- The **Commission** explained that mountain areas are already defined in article 31.2 of the Regulation. Regarding the adoption of derogations by Member States, the draft delegated act does not force them to do so, it is an option for them and they have the choice.
- The **chair** concluded underlining the unanimity of producers, workers and consumers in their interventions regarding the current draft. The discussion should be focused on the technical issues and it was suggested to have more reflection on the current derogations.

b) "Local farming and direct sales": Preparation of the report on the case for a new local farming and direct sales labelling scheme

- The **COM Representative** explained that the Commission has to submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the case for a new local farming and direct sales labelling scheme as requested by article 55 of the Regulation 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The work on the delegated act has not continued and finally, the report shall be submitted to the European Parliament and Council without being accompanied by a legal text. It means that the report will launch the discussion with the both institutions. Regarding the report, it has been drafted internally and now it is in the Inter-service consultation.

The report has also taken into account other criteria, such as the possibility of reducing waste because it is asked for in the basic regulation. The report is accompanied by a Staff Working Document (SWD) which examines the challenges faced by producers and short food supply chains and presents existing tools at EU level. Possibilities for a new labelling scheme are explained and discussed in the report itself.

When preparing the report and the SWD, the Commission services have also taken into account the outcome of the Conference organized in 2012 and looked into specific EU rules such as hygiene rules and public procurement provisions. Since the document is in the Inter-service consultation, the Commission is not able to provide more information about the content at his moment.

- The **chair** thanked the presentation made by the Commission and asked for clarification regarding the draft delegated act presented during the last meeting of the Advisory Group. It was requested if the delegated act was going to cover direct sales or local farming as both concepts were mixed-up in the draft.
- The **Commission** explained that in the report there are some clarifications about these concepts and that in autumn 2013 they did not continue working on the delegated act. Now, they will submit the report that will launch the discussion with the European Parliament and the Council and they want to have further feedback based on the discussion on the report, before taking any decision on a legal text.

- The **chair** opened the floor for eventual comments/questions:

- **Copa-Cogeca** was pleased to see that the Commission is going to wait for the submission of the report to the European Parliament and the Council as requested by article 55 of the basic regulation before making a decision on a legal text. It was also asked if short supply chains and local farming are defined in the report due to the importance to have an overview on this. It was also reminded about the Working Group "from my farm" and its discussions. Although there is a link with the discussion on sustainability, it was underlined that everything cannot be communicated across the label. It was also requested more clarification regarding the environmental criteria explored in the report.

- It was also asked to clarify whether a new labelling scheme would be under the Quality regulation or regulation 1169/2011 on food information to consumers and also regarding the time framework and next steps.

- Representative from **ERPA** stressed that even though they are in favour of the initiative, there is a lack of definitions of a farm and of any limit to the size of a farm.

- Representative from **Euromontana** suggested also other environmental criteria such as energy efficiency or footprint and the positive environmental impact of this system. It was asked for a clarification regarding the objective of the report (direct sales or local farming).

The **Commission** explained that in the report and the SWD, the European support measures for this system are explored. Such schemes could get support through Rural Development but there is also a link with promotion activities.

For the time framework, the report shall be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council and then, it is up to them to decide how they want to deal with it.

If there was a new label, the Commission Representative explained that it seems that it should be within the Quality regulation. Article 55 says that the Commission should make legislative proposals if necessary.

Regarding the environmental criteria, the report is focused on waste and CO₂ emissions because this was foreseen by the legislator in article 55. It was not possible to focus on more taking into account that a report should be short and succinct. The report also explores the economic and social issues of local farming and direct sales.

c) "Island farming": Preparation of the report on the case for a new term "product of island farming":

- The **COM Representative** explained that according to Article 32 of the Quality Regulation, no later than 4th January 2014 the Commission shall present a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the case for a new term "product of island farming". This report shall, if necessary, be accompanied by appropriate legislative proposals to reserve an optional quality term.

With a view to collect information and positions on this issue two separate written consultations processes were already launched for the Member States and for the stakeholders. The stakeholders' consultation was launched on October 2012 based on a written questionnaire. Despite the invitation, and recalls at the Advisory Group meetings of 19 February and of 25th of June, only Copa-Cogeca, Arepo, NFU, Baleares and the Ile of Lewis have sent written replies.

Besides the written consultations, DG AGRI services closely cooperated with JRC-IPTS in the organization of a Workshop on the "Labeling of Products of Island Farming and Food Industries" that took place on 13-14 June 2013 in Seville.

The Commission is now working on the draft text of the report and expect launch the ISC as soon as possible so as to be ready for the adoption by the Commission at the end of 2013. In this way it will be ready for the fixed deadline of 4th of January 2014 to present the report to the Council and the European Parliament

The draft report, explores the socio-economic implications of island farming, and the specificities of agricultural production in islands. It also reviews existing labelling schemes and reflects on the interest of reserving a new Optional Quality Term (OQT) "product of island farming.

The text identifies a number of advantages and disadvantages of reserving a new OQT and invites the European Parliament and the Council to discuss and provide their feedback

- **Copa-Cogeca** asked for clarification regarding the definition of island used in the report.

- The **COM Representative** explained that the report is a fact finding document reflecting the existing definitions and criteria used at EU level to identify what it is an island. The main conclusion is that there is not single definition nor common criteria and that all depends on the aim and context. For the purpose of deciding if reserving a new OQT, the criteria to be set will depend on the outcome of the discussions that will have to take place with the European Parliament and Council after the submission of the report.

- The **chair** stressed that in the case of Italy, PDOs and PGIs are very important for the islands. It was asked if the OQT would seek for promotion of certain types of island farming in the islands or quality.

- The **COM Representative** explained that the report tries to put all the elements on the table in order to foster the discussion. Commission services have analyzed the labelling practices used by island products and have tried to understand the added value that the eventual reservation of an OQT would mean. They have seen that the key characteristics, qualities and/or reputation of most of island products are already covered by PDOs and PGIs. However some small producers do not have access to PDOs or PGIs due to the cost involved and the OQT could in principle be more accessible.

- **Representative from ..?** underlined that the OQT are part of the the quality regulation but their interpretation is not linked to a particular quality of the product. Organic farming or TSG are labels that represent quality nevertheless, this is not the approach taken into account in the case of "mountain products" or direct sales where the focus is on the short food supply chain rather than the quality of the product. Whether we are look at quality, we should focus on this.
(I do not understand this point)

- The **Commission Representative** recalled that as they have been called by the European Parliament and Council to prepare the report (article 32). The pros and cons of creating an OQT are addressed in the report as well as the eventual consequences or impact for the systems in place. As the scope of the eventual new OQT was questioned, Commission representative reminded that article 32 of the Quality Regulation stipulates that the term shall be used to describe products intended for human consumption that are listed in Annex I to the Treaty, the raw materials of which come from islands. In the case of processed products, processing must also take place on islands in cases where this substantially affects the particular characteristics of the final product.

- The **chair** stressed that the potential optional quality term is very generic and that it would be interesting to see how and to what extent operators would use it. The criteria set by the legislator is in the Quality Regulation appears very strict.

- Representative from **CELCAA** explained that in order to improve the quality systems already in place with the protected geographical indications or protected designations of origin we also have to consider that any eventual extension of the systems, as long as we have controls, will result into more complex systems

3. Common Agricultural Policy focused on quality related issues:

a) Regulation on support for Rural Development:

- The **Commission Representative** explained that the Political agreement took place in June 2013 and the text was finalized at the end of September after the MFF. The texts will be published at the end of this year. The Commission has also been working on delegated acts. It was explained that there will not be any program gap between both periods.

This new article 17 is going to cover all quality schemes of regulation (EU) 1151/2012, organic (Council Regulation 834/2007), spirit drinks (Regulation 110/2008) and wines (Council Regulation (EEC) 1601/91. Also, quality schemes, including farm certification schemes for agricultural if they are recognized by Member States and voluntary agricultural product certification schemes recognized by the Member States as meeting the Union Best practice guidelines.

The support under this measure will also cover costs arising from information and promotion activities

- Representative from the trade asked if participation in fairs was covered as a kind of promotion.

- Representative from **Arepo** asked more clarification regarding support under this measure for promotion and

participation in fairs. It was also requested more information regarding the Commission's proposal on promotion of agricultural products.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** asked clarification regarding beneficiaries and support. It was also asked if national quality schemes would be financed twice, for example, a national quality system on integrating farming. It can receive support because it is a national quality system but also due to the agri-environment measures. Is it possible to receive a contribution twice? It was also requested more clarification regarding the costs covered by the support.

- The **COM Representative** explained that regarding the type of operations, it covers costs arising from information and promotion activities implemented by groups of producers in the internal market, not only fairs. The measure represents an incentive for new entries, not for someone already established. Regarding group of producers, this is going to be detailed in delegated acts, they do not mean producer groups under legal entities.

Regarding eligible products, they have to be covered by a quality scheme and remunerate the moment of entering such scheme and in the early years of participation. Only new entries can get support for the promotion. There is flexibility for Member States in order to give incentives to promotion and participation in the schemes. National schemes have to be recognized by the Member State.

In the case of combination of measures, this new period promotes the creation of synergies in order to get an integrated program but it cannot be done for the same type of operations. For example, support through article 15 and 17. It means that the regulation is promoting integrated participation but the support shall never be for the same operations.

b) Marketing standards in the framework of the proposal for a Regulation on the "single CMO": - state of play after the agreement on the reform.

The **COM Representative** explained that the marketing standards are part of the new single CMO. Instead of general marketing standards, the scope has been restricted to the following sectors: olive oil and table olives, fruit and vegetables, processed fruit and vegetables, bananas, live plants, eggs, poultry meat, spreadable fats intended for human consumption and hops. At the end of the day, there will be delegated acts for these products giving more flexibility. These marketing standards may cover some requirements based on the characteristics of each sector. Without prejudice to Regulation 1169/2011 on food information to consumers, these marketing standards may cover one or more of the different requirements of the regulation (technical definitions, classification criteria or, place of farming and/or origin...) to be determined on a sectorial or product basis, based on the characteristics of each sector.

- It was asked clarification regarding the relation of regulation 1169/2011 on food information to consumers and these Marketing standards under the single CMO.

- The COM Representative explained that these marketing standards may cover the products already mentioned without prejudice to article 26 of this regulation on food information to consumers.

c) Information on the management of supply for products covered by a PDO, PGI in the framework of the Regulation on the "single CMO" (cheese and ham)

- The **COM Representative** explained that by analogy to what it has been done for cheese following the milk package, the new Regulation on the single CMO also foresees this for the ham. Member States can adopt mandatory rules for regulations supply of ham. But only ham and cheese with PDOs and PGIs.

Upon the request of a producer organisation, interbranch organisation or a group of operators, Member States can lay down for a limited period of time binding rules for the regulation of the supply of cheese and ham benefiting from a protected designation of origin or from a protected geographical indication.

As part of the consultation, it needs an agreement of at least two thirds of the producers or processors of that product in the geographical area. In the case of ham, it will cover the product but also the raw material. The rules cannot be more than 3 years and shall have effect only on the product concerned.

Member States have to notify the agreement to the Commission that can intervene if some of the rules are not complied with. The aim of this measure is to regulate supply and to keep the high quality of these products.

- Representative from **Origin** underlined their agreement and satisfaction with the measure as a way to make sure high quality of the products.

- Representative from **CELCAA** requested clarification regarding the agreement and the involvement of the Commission in the agreement and how to assess a crisis.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** asked if the measure could be extended more than 3 years if there is a crisis.

- The **COM Representative** explained that the Commission is not involved in the agreement. Member States have to lay it down. Then, once there is an agreement, it has to be notified to the Commission and MS have to carry out checks to make sure that the conditions are complied with.

There is a possibility to renew it after three years but always after agreement.

4. State of play and results of the Consultation on Sustainability of the Food System (*written contribution*)

- The **COM Representative** from DG ENVI could not participate in the meeting and a short document was sent in order to explain the state of play of the Consultation.

- The chair stressed the importance of trying to understand the impact that sustainability can have on quality. It was suggested to discuss this point in the coming meetings. **Copa-Cogeca** underlined that this is cross-cutting issue that should be discussed in the future.

- The document explains that a public consultation was recently held on this question (it is now closed), where a number of areas for action were presented for discussion: 1) Better technical knowledge on the environmental impacts of food, 2) Stimulating sustainable food production, 3) Promoting sustainable food consumption, 4) Reducing food waste and losses and 5) Improving food policy coherence

Over 600 responses were received and the Commission will publish the results of this consultation and the Communication on Sustainability of the Food System at the end of 2013/early 2014

5. Latest information concerning the preparation of implementing rules/reports on the issue of origin labelling (Article 26 of Regulation 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers):

a) Implementation of mandatory origin labelling rules for unprocessed pig, poultry, sheep and goatmeat: Article 26.2 (b) (results of the Study and next steps)

The COM Representative informed about the state of play of the dossier:

- Background: Article 26.2 (b) foresees that the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance shall be mandatory for unprocessed pig, poultry, sheep and goat meat.

The Commission has to adopt an implementing regulation by December 2013 following an impact assessment. For the impact assessment, the Commission has asked for an external study which has been the basis to evaluate impacts of different options. The study will be published in the coming weeks in the DG AGRI web page

and the Commission Impact Assessment report will be published at the moment of the publication of the regulation also in the relevant Commission web page.

The Commission has already started the discussion with Member States on the draft regulation. They have already had three meetings in the Management Committee of the single CMO in DG AGRI and in the Working Group on food information to consumers of SCoFCAH in DG SANCO where the vote has to take place as set in the legal base. The vote is expected end of November.

The Impact assessment considers three options:

- First option (simple): origin defined as EU or third country
- Second option: labelling of the place of rearing and slaughter
- Third option (beef model): the three stages would need to be labeled (born, reared and slaughtered)

Although the first option has very low additional costs in the chain, the meaningful value for consumers is very little compared to the other options. The other options are meaningful but the intermediate model has a cost impact of around one half of the beef model. In the case of the beef sector it is easier to label the place of birth because there is a bovine national register while in the case of pig and poultry there is not such an identification system. In the case of pigs identification is made by groups of animals.

On the basis of the Impact Assessment, the Commission has proposed the intermediate option meaning compulsory indication of the place of rearing and of the place of slaughter. The minimum rearing period that identifies the rearing place will be defined as the latest period of at least two months in the case of sheep and goat and swine, and one in the case of poultry. This rule is inspired from the Community Customs Code but this point is still subject to discussion with Member States.

- The chair thanked the Commission and opened the floor for eventual comments/questions:

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** requested clarification regarding the definition of the rearing period. It was also asked its justification. Producers would like to be part of this discussion. Clarifications are needed for the case when the rearing period is not met (last 15 days in the case of sheep and goat and swine and 5 in the case of poultry before slaughter).

There were also some concerns regarding the option as it was considered a bit complex to be implemented. How to know the period and to implement these rules. Some COPA members asked for the beef model to be applied to other meats and clarification was asked about the identification system. In the case of voluntary claims, there are some systems already in place (i.e. UK or France) and clarification was asked regarding the rules that they will have to apply in order to comply with the legal requirements. It was asked how to ensure that these systems can continue working.

- Representative from **BEUC** stressed that the beef model is a good system that should be used for the other meats. Consumers are interested to know this information. The rearing period defined through the Community Customs Code is misleading for consumers, and strongly opposed to it. [It is possible to depart from the Customs Code since the Food Information also provides for the option of labelling the 'place of provenance', which could be defined as the animal's country of birth, rearing and slaughter.](#)

- Representative from **ERPA** stressed the importance of taking into account the different animals life cycle in order to draft the rules.

- The **COM Representative** replied that it is not mandatory to identify pigs individually, only in some cases where there are protected by designations of origin or protected geographical indications. The current rules identify a group of animals.

Regarding the rearing periods, the proposed general rules are consistent with the Community Customs code. Country of origin is defined in the regulation 1169/2011 of food information to consumers. The last period of 15 or 5 days in case the general requirement is not met is in order to make sure that a rearing place is given to all animals. Normally, animals will meet the general conditions, and a minority will falls under the residual rule of the 15 or 5 days.

Regarding voluntary labelling, the mandatory information on rearing and slaughtering places can be complemented with the place of birth. The label can also be complemented by additional information such as the name of the region if it complies with the rules of chapter V of Regulation (EU) N° 1169/2011 and it is not contradictory with the mandatory indications of the implementing act. This additional information will be provided if operators can prove it.

- Representative from Copa-Cogeca stressed the complexity of the period of 15 & 5 days in case the general rule is not met. Some doubts were also expressed regarding the use of the Community Customs Code. It was also asked the use of flags with this intermediate option, meaning only place of rearing and slaughter.

- Representative of the trade and the processing industry expressed strong reluctance against the additional requirement in terms of traceability.

- The **COM Representative** stressed that all animals need to have a rearing place to be labelled in case the general rearing period criteria is not met. Traceability of the meat is needed to assure the reliability of the information to be provided to the consumers. Regarding the possibility to use the word "origin" as an indication, the Commission is still discussing with Member States.

The aim of the initiative is thus to provide consumers with the mandatory origin information required by the legislator while avoiding unnecessary burdens for the meat supply chain and the administration. At the moment, there a lot of discussions with Member States and several points still open.

b) Implementation of voluntary origin labelling of foods - Article 26.3 (results of the Study and next steps)

The **COM Representative** explained the state of play of Article 26.3 and mentioned that when the origin of the food is given and it is not the same for the primary ingredient, the country of origin or place of provenance of the primary ingredient in question shall also be given or shall be indicated as being different to that of the food (e.g. canned tomatoes where the origin given is Belgium but the tomatoes are from the Netherlands).

Now, the modalities for implementing the requirement will be set up through implementing acts. In that context, DG SANCO has carried out a Study to a Consultant which was delivered on May and there is also an impact assessment.

The Commission has already discussed twice with Member States a draft implementing act but for the moment, this draft is in the pipeline. There are more reflections and the document will be reworked.

c) The origin of meat used as an ingredient - Article 26.6 (report on the mandatory origin labelling)

The **Commission** explained that regarding the report on the mandatory indication of origin for meat used as an ingredient, it will be published as soon as possible. The Commissioner committed to deliver before the deadline foreseen by the regulation (13 December 2013). In the report, there are different elements taken into account such as the need for consumers to be informed or the impact on the internal market and international trade.

The COM Representative provided the main conclusions of the report: it will be a short report accompanied by a Commission staff working document.

Consumer interest in origin labelling for meat ingredients appears to be considerably strong. There are also some factors like price or quality/sensory aspects in terms of important factors affecting consumer choice. At price increases, the willingness to pay falls.

Different modalities have been studied: 1) meat preparations and products made from mechanically separated meat, 2) meat products, 3) multi-ingredient foods with meat ingredients.

Regarding consumer interest, there are not differences between the different categories. In the report three scenarios have been examined:

- Maintain origin labelling on voluntary basis: it would not raise any major impact or challenge for food business operators nevertheless, it does not provide a solution to the consumer demand to be informed about the origin.
- Introduce mandatory origin labelling based on EU/non-EU: this scenario could respond partially to the need of consumers to be informed but it may be considered as too generic and not worthy of any price increase resulting from additional operating costs for food business operators that can be from negligible up to 25%.
- Introduce mandatory origin labelling indicating the Member State or third country: this scenario provides meaningful information to consumers, nevertheless, it is likely to bring extra costs for the FBOs, resulting in price increases. Of course, these figures also depend on the nature of the products and different species. The report covers all species.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** stressed the importance of surveying consumers after the horse meat scandal. Although there are already studies that survey consumers in order to identify the reasons to buy products, it is important to know if the scandal has changed this behavior regarding the willingness to pay. In some Member States, mandatory origin labelling would not mean additional costs because there are already some voluntary labelling systems in place. It was also asked the next steps after the publication of this report, if the approach will be the same for all kind of meats as the report covers all kind of meats. In the case of multi-ingredient products it was also requested if they have thought about primary ingredients or all kinds of meat present in the final product.

- Representative from **BEUC** asked the Commission if they were planning to consult stakeholders as part of the process as BEUC had severe concerns with the report, in particular regarding the estimated extra costs incurred by origin labelling, which it deemed were highly questionable, and the way the results of BEUC's and its members' surveys had been reflected in the report (including in relation to the consumer willingness to pay). BEUC also expressed the view that some of the report's conclusions seemed pretty arbitrary and lacked substantiation.

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- The Commission replied to the questions made by some of the experts:

All the analysis is in the Commission staff working document that will be published together with the report. They have seen that origin goes after other issues like sensory aspects or price in terms of most important factors affecting consumer choice. 90% of the consumers would like to know information about the origin.

In the Commission staff Working document it is considered that the results of this analysis have been affected after the horse meat scandal.

Regarding the next steps, the report is factual and written in a neutral manner in order to launch broader discussions with the European Parliament and Council. They pretend to set up a general discussion. Stakeholders were consulted during the process and now the report will be sent to European Parliament and Council.

d) State of play of the reports regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for the following foods: other meats, milk, milk used as an ingredient in dairy products, unprocessed foods, single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food (Article 26.5)

The COM Representative explained that there will be two studies following article 26.5 of regulation 1169/2011. It is foreseen that by December 2014, the Commission shall submit reports to the European Parliament and the Council regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin for the following foods: a) types of meat other than beef, sheep and goat, poultry and swine, 2) milk, 3) milk used as an ingredient in dairy products, 4) unprocessed foods, 5) single ingredient products and 6) ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food.

Last 20 July, a Steering Committee with DG SANCO, DG AGRI and DG ENTERPRISE took place. The terms of reference have already been published and DG AGRI will lead the report regarding other kinds of meat, milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products. The study is foreseen to start at the end of this year and there will be ten months. At the end of September, the Commission plans to have the results in order to reach the date foreseen by the legislator (December 2014).

In parallel, there is also foreseen an Eurobarometer survey addressing the following questions: the need of consumers to know this information and their willingness to pay an extra cost

On the other hand, DG SANCO will lead another report together with DG AGRI to see possible labelling for unprocessed food, single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food. The scope of these products will be defined in the coming months and the Commission will have more information soon.

6. AOB

During any other business, following the request at the beginning of the meeting, the Commission explained the state of play of the Commission's proposal for a regulation on official controls. In the Council there is a joint Working Party working on this. In the case of the European Parliament COM ENVI is drafting the report. In the Commission, DG SANCO is responsible for the proposal.

- Representative from **CELCAA** asked for clarification regarding optional quality terms and official controls.
- **Copa-Cogeca** also requested more clarification about this. It was also underlined the existence of different private schemes that could be used for controls. National Authorities can save some work. It would be interesting to think how we can establish a link between both checks: private quality system and official controls. We have to look for synergies. There are duplications.
- The chair explained the situation in Italy where there are some duplications, i.e. a lot of organic products are also products with PDOs and PGIs.
- Representative from **CELCAA** also requested more information regarding the geographical indication protection for non-agricultural products as it was discussed during the last meeting.
- The Commission explained that DG MARKT is in charge of this dossier. Currently, they are working on this. During this year, a public hearing was organized and a study on Geographical indication protection for non-agricultural products in the Internal market was also published.
- Representative from **Arepo** explained that in France there are already discussions at national level.
- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** also underlined this discussion in France and the difficulty to compare agricultural and non-agricultural products due to different requirements.
- The **Chair** concluded the meeting by thanking the members of the group for their participation, the Commission services for their assistance and the interpreters for their work and informed that the next meeting of the Advisory Group will take place on 18 February.

Disclaimer

"The opinions expressed in this report represent the point of view of the meeting participants from agriculturally related NGOs at community level. These opinions cannot, under any circumstances, be attributed to the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the here above information."