

U.S., Cooperating Countries File WTO Case Against EU

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Tuesday, U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that the U.S., Argentina, Canada, and Egypt will file a World Trade Organization (WTO) case against the European Union (EU) over its illegal five-year moratorium on approving agricultural biotech products.

Other countries expressing support for this case by joining it as third parties include Australia, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, and Uruguay.

"The EU's moratorium violates WTO rules. People around the world have been eating biotech food for years. Biotech food helps nourish the world's hungry population, offers tremendous opportunities for better health and nutrition, and protects the environment by reducing soil erosion and pesticide use," said Zoellick. "We've waited patiently for five years for the EU to follow the WTO rules and the recommendations of the European Commission, so as to respect safety findings based on careful science. The EU's persistent resistance to abiding by its WTO obligations has perpetuated a trade barrier unwarranted by the EC's own scientific analysis, which impedes the global use of a technology that could be of great benefit to farmers and consumers around the world."

"With this case, we are fighting for the interests of American agriculture. This case is about playing by the rules negotiated in

good faith. The European Union has failed to comply with its WTO obligations," said Veneman. "Biotechnology is helping farmers increase yields, lower pesticide use, improve soil conservation, (control) water pollution, and help reduce hunger and poverty around the world."

"Farmers here and elsewhere must be assured that their crops won't be unfairly rejected simply because they were produced using biotechnology. The EU actions threaten to deny the full development of a technology that holds enormous potential benefits to both producers and consumers worldwide, while also providing a very significant means to combat hunger and malnutrition that afflict hundreds of millions of people across the developing world."

The WTO agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) recognizes that countries are entitled to regulate crops and food products to protect health and the environment. The WTO SPS agreement requires, however, that members have "sufficient scientific evidence" for such measures, and that they operate their approval procedures without "undue delay." Otherwise, there is a risk countries may without justification use such regulations to thwart trade in safe, wholesome, and nutritious products.

Before 1999, the EU approved nine agriculture biotech products for planting or import. It then suspended consideration of all new applications for approval, and has offered no scientific evidence for this moratorium on

new approvals. As EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom said about three years ago (July 13, 2000): "We have already waited too long to act. The moratorium is illegal and not justified... the value of biotechnology is poorly appreciated in Europe."

Agricultural biotechnology is a continuation of the long tradition of agricultural innovation that has provided the basis for rising prosperity for the past millennium. Humankind has historically progressed in boosting agricultural productivity, quality, and choices by harnessing science to develop new forms of crops.

More than 145 million acres (58 million hectares) of biotech crops were grown in the world in 2002. Worldwide, about 45 percent of soy, 11 percent of corn, 20 percent of cotton, and 11 percent of rapeseed are biotech crops. In the U.S., 75 percent of soy, 34 percent of corn, and 71 percent of cotton are biotech crops.

Numerous organizations, researchers and scientists have determined that biotech foods pose no threat to humans or the environment. Examples include the French Academy of Medicine and Pharmacy, and the French Academy of Sciences, the 3,200 scientists who cosponsored a declaration on biotech foods and numerous scientific studies, including a joint study conducted by the seven national academies of science (the National Academies of Science of the United States, Brazil, China, India, and Mexico, plus the Royal Society of London and the Third World Academy of Sciences).

In October 1998, the EU stopped approving any new agriculture biotech products for planting or import. This moratorium had no effect on any previously-approved products, such as corn and soy, which are still used and are available in member countries, but it froze the approval process in the EU. No biotech product has ever been rejected for approval in the EU.

Since the late 1990s, the EU has pursued policies that undermine agricultural biotechnology and trade in biotech foods. First, six member states (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, and Luxembourg) banned modified crops approved by the EU, and the Commission refused to challenge the illegal bans. In 1998, member states began blocking all new biotech applications. This approval moratorium is causing a growing portion of U.S. agricultural exports to be excluded from EU markets and unfairly casting concerns about biotech products around the world, particularly in developing countries.

The first step in a WTO dispute, which the United States

and other countries are taking today, is to request and conduct consultations in the next 60 days. WTO procedures are designed to encourage parties to resolve their differences. If at the end of the 60 days, no resolution has been achieved, then the U.S. and the cooperating countries may seek the formation of a dispute settlement panel to hear arguments. Dispute settlement procedures, including appeal, typically take a total of 18 months.

Joining Zoellick and Veneman at the Washington announcement were Dr. C.S. Prakash (organizer of a pro-agricultural biotech declaration signed by 20 Nobel Laureates and more than 3,200 scientists); T.J. Buthelezi, a small farmer of biotech crops from South Africa; Dr. Diran Makinde, DVM, dean of the School of Agriculture, University of Venda for Science and Technology, South Africa; Dr. Ariel Alvarez-Morales, principal scientist, Department of Plant Genetic Engineering, Center for Research and Advanced Studies, Irapuato, Mexico; and representatives from countries participating in the case.

Holstein Association Announces Junior Member Contest Semifinalists

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. — Holstein Association USA, Inc., this week announced the 12 semifinalists in its annual Distinguished Junior Member (DJM) contest.

The semifinalists all have won the Distinguished Junior Member contest at their state level and will compete at the 2003 National Holstein Convention, June 21-24, in Winston-Salem, N.C., to be named a national finalist.

The status of Distinguished Junior Member is the highest honor the Association bestows upon its junior members, which membership base numbers more than 10,000 nationally. Since

1922, the contest has honored more than 274 outstanding dairy youth for their contributions to the Association and the dairy industry as a whole.

The semifinalists this year are: Anthony Brey, Sturgeon Bay, Wis; John Cannon, West Union, Iowa; Benjamin Dorshorst, Junction City, Wis; McKenzie Hanahan, Stillwater, N.Y.; Thomas Harwood, Shippensburg, Pa; Ann Haughian, Rice Lake, Wis; Miranda Miller, Tillamook, Ore.; Trent Olson, Lewiston, Minn; Bill Rauen, Farley, Iowa; Robert Teixeira, Turlock, Calif.; Aaron Ray Tompkins, Ennice, N.C.; Chad Wethal, Brooklyn, Wis.

Forums Provide Grassroots Input On Dairy Checkoff Programs

PHILADELPHIA — Members of the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association board of directors were among 400 producers nationwide who participated in five regional planning forums focusing on 2004 dairy checkoff programs.

Hosted by Dairy Management Inc., which manages the national dairy checkoff program, the forums provided for grassroots input on the 2004 Unified Marketing Plan. Dairy farmers attending the forums, conducted in March and April, reviewed current dairy promotion and marketing campaigns and commented on strategic plans for future programs.

"It's important for us to hear what dairy producers think about our promotion efforts," said R. Steven Graybeal, a Lancaster County dairy farmer and chairman of Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association. "This type of grassroots

input assures that dairy checkoff programs work to help build demand in a way that benefits U.S. dairy producers."

Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association board members attended a forum March 20-21 in Albany, N.Y. They reviewed the following five strategic platforms for driving dairy demand in 2004:

- Marketing channels, featuring key partnerships with retail grocery chains, national restaurant chains and food manufacturers, such as those participating in the 3-A-Day of Dairy campaign.

- Childhood nutrition, including the "New Look of School Milk" program, which aims to make "enhanced milk" (more flavors of milk in single-serve, plastic resealable containers available through the school feeding line, ala carte line and vending) pervasive in schools across

the country.

- Innovation strategies, such as extended shelf life dairy products and other emerging technologies for dairy ingredients, including cheese, whey, and dry milk.

- Dairy image programs, which help maintain and enhance consumer confidence in dairy products and dairy farming.

- Export marketing, including demand-building market development and expansion programs in Latin America, the Pacific Rim, Mexico, and other global markets.

According to Graybeal, producer input has led to significant shifts in national marketing efforts. One example is the development of the 3-A-Day Dairy program, a nutrition-based consumer marketing and education initiative.

Scientists Urge EU To End Biotech Food Ban

WASHINGTON, D.C.— A distinguished panel of international scientists gathered in Washington recently to speak out against the European Union's (EU's) moratorium on trade in genetically engineered foods.

"The European Union's refusal to license new biotech crops is a clear and blatant violation of its

obligations under trade treaties it has signed and ratified," said Competitive Enterprise Institute Director of Food Safety Policy Gregory Conko. "More importantly, it poses a genuine threat to the health and well-being of people throughout the developing world."

As a direct consequence of the

EU moratorium, numerous developing countries have resisted adopting high-yielding biotech crops for fear of losing important European export markets. Last fall, the countries of Zambia and Zimbabwe even refused to accept U.S. food aid, for fear that Europeans would cease future imports from those countries.

John Schwartz Memorial Golf Tournament June 5

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The Lancaster County Poultry Association has announced plans for the second annual John H. Schwartz Memorial Golf Tournament June 5 at the Foxchase Golf Course, Stevens.

This tournament celebrates the memory of the former county ex-

tension director. Hole sponsorships at \$100 are still being taken. Cost per person to attend is \$60, which includes greens fee, cart, range balls, refreshments, prizes, and chicken barbecue meal after play.

Registration and lunch is scheduled at 11:30 a.m. "Shot-

gun" start is 1 p.m. The tournament is limited to the first 144 golfers and the registration deadline is May 30.

Registrations should be made with Gregory Martin at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center, Room 1, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601, (717) 394-6851 or fax (717) 394-3962.

2003 PENNSYLVANIA HOLSTEIN ASSOCIATION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 11	6:30 P.M. CENTRE/CLEINTON HOLSTEIN CLUB PICNIC PAUL DOTTERER & SONS FARM MILL HALL PA
JUNE 14	7:00 P.M. SOMERSET COUNTY CLUB PICNIC LATCH BROTHERS DAIRY ROCKWOOD PA
JUNE 17	7:00 P.M. SNYDER/UNION TWILIGHT MEETING CLARENCE SHIRK FARM BEAVERTOWN, PA
JUNE 21-24	NATIONAL HOLSTEIN CONVENTION ADAMS MARK HOTEL, WINSTON-SALEM NC
JULY 8-9	12:00 NOON PA JUNIOR JUDGING SCHOOL TIOGA COUNTY
JULY 13	PA HOLSTEIN ASSOCIATION SUMMER PICNIC AND ACTIVITIES ALTOONA, PA
JULY 23	9:30 A.M. YORK COUNTY HOLSTEIN SHOW 4 H CENTER, YORK, PA
JULY 26	10:00 A.M. SOUTHWEST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAIRGROUNDS, UNIONTOWN, PA
JULY 31	9:30 A.M. NORTHERN TIER CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAIRGROUNDS, MESHOPPEN, PA
AUGUST 1	9:30 A.M. NORTHWEST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAIRGROUNDS, NEW CASTLE PA
AUGUST 8	12:00 NOON CLINTO COUNTY HOLSTEIN SHOW FAIRGROUNDS, MACKEVILLE, PA
AUGUST 9	9:30 A.M. SOUTH-CENTRAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAIRGROUNDS, SHIPPENSBURG PA
AUGUST 16	11:00 A.M. WARREN COUNTY HOLSTEIN SALE FAIRGROUNDS, PITTSFIELD, PA
AUGUST 16	6:00 P.M. CENTRAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAIRGROUNDS HUNTINGDON PA
AUGUST 19	9:30 A.M. NORTHEAST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAIRGROUNDS WHITNEYVILLE PA
AUGUST 20	9:30 A.M. SOUTHEAST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAIRGROUNDS, LEBANON PA
AUGUST 23	9:30 A.M. FRANKLIN COUNTY HOLSTEIN SHOW FAIRGROUNDS CHAMBERSBURG, PA