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Report Highlights:

Highlights of the September Agriculture and Fisheries Council Meeting in Brussels included talks on coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic crops, reform of the tobacco, olive oil, cotton and sugar sectors, and Spanish national aid in nuts. Items approved without debate were the adoption of CAP reform, wine, aerial surveys for agricultural statistics, fishing agreements between the EEC and the Republic of Guinea, and food security relating to zoonoses and foot-and-mouth disease.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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SUMMARY:

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COEXISTENCE

The Council addressed the main concerns regarding coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming after receiving the Commission's Recommendation proposal. The recommendation was welcomed and regarded as the first step in implementing a coexistence policy in line with existing EU Directives. The Council also took the opportunity to state their positions in regards to a questionnaire previously submitted by the Presidency. Regarding GMO-free zones, Member states discussed the possibility of considering regional measures and the consideration of different plant varieties and regional conditions when addressing the issue further. Many delegations requested a definition of GMO-free zones. Regarding thresholds, several delegations asked for tolerance thresholds for the adventitious presence of GMOs to be quickly adopted, whereas others declared that the establishment of new thresholds was unnecessary. The adventitious presence of GMOs in organic agriculture was also discussed, and many delegations questioned the need for tolerance thresholds and wanted further discussion on the matter. Community-level liability rules were addressed, and many delegations wanted to explore the possibility of their implementation in the event of contamination or distortions in competition.

REFORM OF THE TOBACCO, OLIVE OIL, COTTON AND SUGAR SECTORS

The Council heard a presentation by Commissioner Fischler on a communication entitled "Accomplishing a sustainable agricultural model for Europe through the reformed CAP – the tobacco, olive oil, cotton and sugar sectors". The Council also heard the comments from the Spanish, Greek and Danish delegations on this subject. The Council asked the Special Committee on Agriculture to start discussions and reports on the topic.

SPANISH NATIONAL AID ON NUTS

The Council also agreed to postpone its discussion on Spain's request to provide national aid for the nut sector until the October 13th meeting.

ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE**ADAPTATION OF CAP REFORM**

The Council formally adopted seven Regulations on CAP reform without debate. These Regulations cover: common rules for direct support schemes under CAP and producers of certain crops; rural development; market in cereals; market in rice; market in dried fodder; market in milk and milk products; and a levy in the milk and milk products sector. The Portuguese delegation voted against the support schemes for certain crops ("horizontal" Regulation), and the Danish with the support of the Swedish delegation opposed point V of 12977/03 ADD 1. The reformed CAP introduces two new elements: the partial decoupling of production-related aid and increases in horizontal aid that is separate from production activity. The Council claims that the reform should allow the EU to comply more easily with

WTO commitments, specifically by transferring almost all production-related aid which distorts production and trade ("orange" and "blue" boxes) to minimally distorting, "green box" aid.

WINE

The Council adopted an EC Regulation which authorizes certain wines to be imported from Argentina which may have undergone oenological processes not covered in the Regulation. A one year extension was granted for the importation of these wines which contain malic acid, an alcoholic acid which is not authorized for winemaking processes in the Community.

AERIAL SURVEYS FOR AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

The Council adopted the Decision on the continued application of aerial surveys and remote-sensing techniques for agricultural statistics for 2004-2007. The Decision relates to two major scientific projects now taking place, MARS (Monitoring Agriculture with Remote Sensing) and LUCAS (Land Use Cover Area frame statistical Survey). The German delegation abstained.

FISHERIES

The Council adopted the Regulation that concludes the Agreement between the EEC and the Republic of Guinea on fishing rights off the Guinean coast from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003. The Agreement provides fishing opportunities for boats allocated between Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal and France.

FOOD SECURITY

The Council approved the European Parliament's amendments to Regulations on the control on salmonella and other food-borne zoonotic agents (Regulation 8968/03 and 11796/03). The Council also adopted the Directive on Community measures for the control of foot-and-mouth disease.

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E23184	EU formally adopts CAP Reform	9/30/03
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E23102	Update from Luxembourg Agriculture Council	6/12/03
E23091	May Agriculture Council Meeting	6/4/03

E23071	April Agriculture Council Meeting	5/14/03
E23069	March Agriculture Council Meeting	5/12/03
E23027	February Agriculture Council Meeting	2/28/03
E23014	January Agriculture Council Meeting	1/31/03