



European Association of Dairy Trade
Europäischer Verband
des Handels mit Milcherzeugnissen
Association Européenne du Commerce
des Produits Laitiers et Dérivés



Mr Giuseppe CASELLA
Head of Unit B2 – Prevention of technical barriers
European Commission DG GROW
Avenue d'Auderghem 45
1049 Brussels

1 September 2015

Subject: Lithuania – mandatory origin labelling

Dear Mr Casella,

Eucolait, the European Association of dairy trade, wishes to express its reservations concerning the recently published 'draft order of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania approving the list of milk and milk products for which the declaration of the country of origin of the milk contained as an ingredient is mandatory on labels and the requirements for declaration of the country of origin of milk used as an ingredient in milk and milk products' (TRIS notification number 2015/465/LT).

Notwithstanding that the draft order expressly states that the requirements contained therein 'shall be applied without prejudice to Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011... on the provision of food information to consumers', Article 26(2) clearly lays down the conditions on the mandatory indication of the country of origin or the place of provenance. In addition, Article 26(5) provides for a report on the feasibility and desirability of mandatory origin labelling for milk and milk used as an ingredient which may or may not lead to legislative action by the EU. Mandatory origin labelling should therefore remain an area which is to be exclusively regulated at EU level.

Moreover, the aforementioned report was published on 20 May 2015 and its conclusions were evidently not taken into account by the Lithuanian authorities.

Even if scope for national measures is taken into consideration, no scientifically supported or sufficiently concrete justification is provided in accordance with Article 39(2) of regulation 1169/2011 (i.e. a 'proven link between certain qualities of the food and its origin or provenance') which would support imposing mandatory origin indication on milk processor undertakings operating in Lithuania. Furthermore, while 67% of respondents to a survey considered milk origin indication to be important, less than one third of respondents stated that they would be willing to pay more for the milk product if an origin indication was provided on the packaging. Consumers attaching significant value to the provision of such information (as required by Article 39(2)) is therefore questionable.

EUCOLAIT aisbl

rue Belliard 199 - B-1040 Brussels - Belgium
Tel. : +32 (0)2 230 44 48 - Fax : 32 (0)2 230 40 44
info@eucolait.eu - www.eucolait.eu

BNP Paribas Fortis Bank : 210-0751020-01 - Place Jamblinne de Meux 18 - B-1030 Brussels IBAN : BE43 2100 7510 2001 SWIFT : GEBA BE BB

It should also be noted that nothing in current legislation prevents companies from capitalising on demand for origin labelled products by providing indications of origin, without recourse to specific legislation requiring such action from companies.

Finally, the requirements set out in the draft order, while only applicable to milk processors located in Lithuania, pose a threat to the proper and complete functioning of the internal market, enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union by increasing the risk that the cross border trade in liquid milk will be hampered and that processors would switch to exclusively Lithuanian supplies to avoid any additional burden caused by changes in product labels.

Eucolait sincerely hopes that our views will be taken into consideration and that the unfettered functioning of the EU internal market is upheld. We therefore call on the Commission to take any measures necessary to prevent this draft order from entering into force in Lithuania.

Yours sincerely,



Jukka Likitalo
Secretary General