



NEWS FROM THE COMMISSION MIDDAY BRIEFING
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Thursday, 12 January, 2012

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Food Chain & Animal Health: Experts discuss risks posed by the “Schmallenberg Virus”

Scientific data on a new virus, the “Schmallenberg virus”, which has recently been detected in ruminants (cattle, sheep, goat) in three Member States, was presented to the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) on 11 January 2012. So far, 86 farms have been detected in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. The three Member States presented information on the virus which apparently causes mild clinical signs in cattle and congenital malformations in sheep and goats. This virus is transmitted through mosquitoes and midges, making direct transmission from animal to animal and further virus spread during winter unlikely. According to the preliminary assessment carried out by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), it is unlikely that this virus would cause disease in humans but it cannot be excluded at this stage. The Standing Committee experts agreed that although there are no clear geographical clusters of infection, the situation needs to be monitored and re-assessed on the basis of emerging data. The experts also agreed to develop a common approach to further investigations and surveys and that stakeholder and veterinary service awareness should be improved to help address the possible risks associated with this new virus. For more information: see the Joint Statement from the European Commission and Member States:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/schmallenberg_virus/index_en.htm

Prospects for EU agricultural markets and income 2011-2020

EU agricultural commodity prices are expected to stay firm over the medium term, according to a new set of forecasts for major EU agricultural commodity markets and agricultural income until 2020 published by the European Commission. Based on certain macro-economic assumptions, the Outlook report by the Directorate-General for Agriculture & Rural Development and the Joint Research Centre – Institute for Perspective Technological Studies (IPTS), indicate that, for cereals, EU market prospects are expected to reflect relatively tight conditions, with low stocks and prices above their recent averages as a result of primarily stronger internal demand for ethanol. Medium-term prospects for EU sugar markets are mixed, with growing demand for bio-ethanol use supporting EU sugar production, while food consumption trends are less positive. In the dairy sector, sustained import demand from emerging economies is expected to have a positive impact on EU dairy commodity prices over the outlook period. Meat market prospects indicate the continuation of a modest recovery, driven by pork and poultry. Prospects for EU agricultural income are mixed, with its average 2020 level expected to decline by 3.5% in EU-15 Member States, but grow strongly by almost 35% in EU-12 Member States, with respect to the corresponding 2007-11 averages. The continued decline in agricultural labour force remains a key factor behind these average

income projections. The report is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/caprep/prospects2011/index_en.htm

[Natalia, Thijs, Tara, Milena ... Galileo satellites bear their names](#)

Over 16 000 children across the EU participated in the Galileo Drawing Competition in a bid to have a Galileo Programme Satellite named after them which will be launched into space. The winners are being announced at award ceremonies in the Member States over the coming weeks.

[November 2011 compared with October 2011 - Industrial production down by 0.1% in both euro area and EU27](#)

In November 2011 compared with October 2011, seasonally adjusted industrial production fell by 0.1% in both the euro area (EA17) and the EU27. In October production decreased by 0.3% in both zones. In November 2011 compared with November 2010, industrial production dropped by 0.3% in the euro area and by 0.2% in the EU27.

Rediffusion

[European Border Breakers Awards: Selah Sue receives public choice award](#)

The winners of the 2012 European Border Breakers Awards ("the EBBAs"), which highlight the best new music acts in Europe who have achieved cross-border chart success, were honoured this evening at the Eurosonic Noorderslag music festival in Groningen (The Netherlands). The biggest winner of the night was Belgian star Selah Sue, who scooped the public choice award, which was announced live during the ceremony following an online vote to select the 'best of the best'. Her debut soul-funk-ragga album, called Selah Sue, was a top 10 hit in Belgium, France and the Netherlands.

[Belgium, Cyprus, Malta and Poland took effective action to correct deficit while Hungary's measures are insufficient](#)

Today the European Commission concluded that Hungary has not made sufficient progress towards a timely and sustainable correction of its excessive deficit. The European Commission proposes to move to the next stage of the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) and recommends that the Council of Ministers decides that no effective action has been taken to bring the deficit below 3% of GDP in a sustainable manner. Subject to this Council decision (under Article 126(8) of the EU Treaty), the Commission will then propose to the Council new recommendations addressed to Hungary (under Article 126(7) of the Treaty) with a view to bringing to an end its excessive government deficit.

OTHER INFORMATION

- [Statement of the European Commission on the situation in Hungary on 11 January 2012 - rediffusion](#)
- [Statement by President Barroso on the first day of the meeting between the European Commission and the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union - rediffusion](#)
- [Memo "Excessive Deficit Procedure \(EDP\): Five Member States assessed" - rediffusion](#)

Source: European Commission - News from the Communication Directorate General's midday briefing. --- [For more information](#) [click here](#)

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