

General News

Nitrates Derogation Maps Published

The final Implementation Map identifying areas that are subject to a reduction in the nitrates limit in 2024 has been published on the DAFM website. In 2022 a nitrates derogation of 250kg/ha was secured until 2025. This was subject to an interim review in 2023 and the commission said that its continuation depended on water quality results. During the summer the EPA published its water quality report 2022 which indicated that ‘Nitrogen levels, mainly from agriculture from fertilisers and manures, have increased in rivers and groundwater’. As a result, the Commission has said there must be a reduction in the maximum limit to 220 kg/ha.

The maps can be viewed at this [link](#). DAFM will be writing to derogation farmers to confirm the reduction from 250 to 220 and will provide other information on the changes.

State of the European Union speech 2023 by President Ursula Von Der Leyen

President Ursula von der Leyen delivered her annual State of the Union speech to the European Parliament on 13 September. The war in Ukraine and its impact on the EU economy, energy and foreign policy dominated the speech but it also included some agri related issues.

Von der Leyen called for “more dialogue” and “less polarisation” on agriculture and said she intends to “launch a strategic dialogue on the future of agriculture.” Much of the speech connected agriculture with the wider goal of the European Green Deal to reach climate neutrality by 2050. Describing the Green Deal as ‘the centrepiece of our economy and unmatched in ambition’, she noted how protecting biodiversity, and the environment would help mitigate the impacts of climate change. She added that ‘at the same time, food security, in harmony with nature, remains an essential task’ and ‘self-sufficiency in food is also important for us’. She thanked EU farmers for providing safe food, adding that many are already working towards a more sustainable form of agriculture to tackle environmental challenges – ‘That is the only way to secure the supply of food for the future’.

Cleaner technology in all sectors and international trade deals were also priority issues in the speech. She described how both were needed to maintain competitiveness in global markets but acknowledged that trade agreements could potentially impact EU farmers.

EU Solidarity Lanes - ‘a lifeline for Ukraine’

The EU and Border countries continue their efforts to enhance infrastructure and capacity along the Danube corridor and through overland solidarity lanes. The importance of the solidarity lanes continues to be emphasised by EU politicians with the EU Transport Commissioner recently describing them as ‘a lifeline for Ukraine’. She said that ‘since the Black Sea Grain Initiative ended in July, they have become the only routes available for Ukraine’s exports and imports’ and highlighted that between May 2022 and August 2023, the Solidarity Lanes have allowed Ukraine to export more than 53 million tonnes of agricultural products, including about 48 million tonnes of grain, oilseeds and other related products. At the same time, Ukraine has imported almost 34 million tonnes of goods via the Solidarity Lanes with a value of around €70 billion.

The focus has been on streamlining procedures and border controls, improving traffic management and increasing and training more staff so that goods can continue to move but wider measures are also being undertaken.

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RASFF ‘S SEPTEMBER 2023

Total Food & Feed	369
Total Feed	27
Feed Materials	18
Pet Food	5
Feed Premixture	1
Feed Additives	1
Animal by products	1
Miscellaneous	1

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These include requiring less bureaucracy for Ukraine and Moldova to seek funding for infrastructure projects, integrating Ukraine's railway systems into the EU transport system and increasing capacity along the Danube corridor to make better use of available capacity at certain ports.

Unilateral Import Bans on Ukraine Products

On 21 September, Ukraine formally initiated the WTO dispute settlement procedure with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic. The dispute centres around the new import bans imposed by these three countries on certain agricultural products, particularly grains, from Ukraine. Kyiv's case is that the measures imposed by the three EU Member States are inconsistent with certain provisions of the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade 1994 and the Agreement on Agriculture. Ukraine claims that the measures taken 'prohibit or restrict the importation of agricultural goods from Ukraine', 'restricts freedom of transit of Ukrainian agricultural goods through the territory' and 'these measures take the form of a ban instead of a duty'.

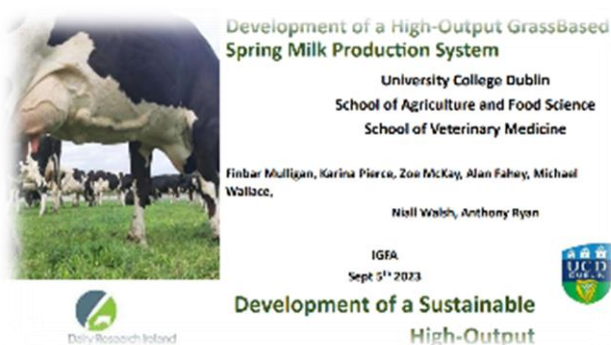
Ukraine has stressed that it is continuing to guarantee European and global food security and has indicated a willingness to withdraw the complaint to the WTO under certain conditions. The discussion and negotiations continue.

UCD Presentation at IGFA Feed Committee

Prof. Finbar Mulligan and Prof. Karina Pierce from UCD attended the IGFA Feed Committee on 5 September. They presented the results of research done on the 'Development of a High-Output Grass-Based Spring Milk Production System'. The research aimed to answer the following questions.

- Is it possible at a national level to produce the amount of milk / dairy product we need, with less cows?
- Is it possible to maintain the same number of dairy farm businesses with less cows and lower stocking rates per farm?
- If some farms adapt the high-output grass-based model will this help industry sustainability?

The work is funded by Dairy Research Ireland and looks at nutrition, grassland management, genetics, nutrition, financials and environmental metrics. The full presentation is available for members on the IGFA website [here](#).



Environment News

European Protein Strategy

The Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament has called for the development of a comprehensive European Protein Strategy to increase protein production. On 19 September 2023, the Committee adopted a draft resolution on the European Protein Strategy, by 33 votes to 9 and 3 abstentions. FEFAC and other stakeholders fed into the discussions and shared their views with MEPs.

This draft resolution outlines a series of proposals aimed at bolstering EU protein production and improving food security:

- **Diversification of Supply Chains:** The EU must diversify its sources of protein to reduce reliance on a limited number of foreign suppliers.
- **Conversion of Protein Crops:** Farmers should receive support to transform protein crops into attractive food and feed products. This includes measures to increase crop resilience, protein yields, and protein quality.
- **Circular Protein Production:** Sustainable plant protein production is emphasized for its benefits to the environment and climate. MEPs recommend the introduction of eco-schemes for legumes and grasslands and create dedicated protein plant funds.
- **Bioenergy Production:** Increasing protein production can contribute to the production of bioenergy products. The Commission is called upon to regulate the use of by-products from plant protein extraction, agricultural residues and food production waste for bioenergy.
- **Research and Environmental Labelling:** Further research and development into protein production and safety within the EU are essential. Additionally, MEPs emphasize the need for more research and development into protein production and safety in the EU. They also call for a science-based and voluntary environmental footprint label for food and feed, allowing consumers to compare the environmental impact of different products.

The draft resolution is expected to undergo a vote by the full European Parliament in mid-October. It will feed into European Commission plans to adopt an EU Protein report in early 2024.

Glyphosate Approval Discussions Continue



Discussions on the approval of the use of Glyphosate continue at a Brussels level. In 2017 the EU approved Glyphosate for 5 years and this was extended for another 12 months last December. In July the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), carried out a risk assessment and peer review of the active substance and although highlighted some data gaps, found ‘the impact of glyphosate on the health of humans, animals and the environment did not identify critical areas of concern’. EFSA’s conclusions were then passed to the European Commission and Member States to decide whether to keep glyphosate on the EU list of approved pesticide active substances.

In September, the European Commission proposed that EU countries authorise the use of glyphosate in farming for another 10 years. Member States have already started to discuss this recommendation and will vote on it at a meeting in mid-October.

EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

EU industry has been highlighting the implementation challenges that they face with the new EUDR, and others have also raised concerns with the new legislation. A group of 17 countries including Argentina, Brazil and Indonesia sent a letter to the European Commission, Council and Parliament at the start of September expressing ‘deep concerns.’ They have asked for more discussions with the EU institutions on the measures within the EUDR and asked for clear implementation guidelines that will help avoid the harmful impacts of the geolocation and traceability measures. The letter also says that the EUDR will drive small holders from international value chains and is unlikely to have a positive impact on reducing deforestation.

Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture in the US, has also written to the Commission claiming that the requirements on low-risk producers such as those in the US are excessive, costly and unnecessary. He added that the measures will not advance the goal to halt and reverse deforestation.

Technical News

Medicated Feed - LOQ and 1% Carryover - Expert Group Animal Nutrition Meeting 4 Oct

In January 2022 [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/4](#) on the manufacture, placing on the market and use of medicated feed came into effect. This regulation repealed the 1990 Directive 90/167/EEC. There were no specific carryover limits set in this new regulation, however article 7 noted the Commission would adopt delegated acts establishing specific maximum levels of cross-contamination for active substances in non-target feed, unless such levels are already established in accordance with Directive 2002/32/EC. In the meantime, we could operate to levels set nationally. Following scientific risk assessment carried out by EFSA, industry surveys and stakeholder engagement, the draft delegated regulation has now been documented and is on the agenda for discussion at the Expert Group Animal Nutrition meeting on 4 October 2023. This group is composed of representatives of national authorities (DAFM) and industry stakeholders (including FEFAC).



In this draft regulation the EU Commission is proposing 1% carryover for non-sensitive species and LOQ for “sensitive species” and LOQ for feed produced after a medicated fish feed is produced. (*Sensitive species are feed, fed to the animals directly in the food chain e.g., feed for dairy ruminants, laying birds and feed for animals in the period before slaughter corresponding to the longest withdrawal period for target species. LOQ = the lowest concentration at which the analyte can be detected*).

On 26 September 2023 FEFAC Animal Nutrition Committee (including IGFA) discussed the draft in detail and a European Feed Industry response was prepared which FEFAC will bring to the table at the meeting on 4 October. On 2 October IGFA presented the details of the regulation to their medicated feed members and an IGFA position was agreed and submitted to DAFM representatives who will attend the meeting on 4 October.

Undesirable Directive 2002/32/EC - Expert Group Animal Nutrition Meeting 4 Oct

The last update to the undesirable directive was in November 2019. Discussions on proposals for changes slowed due to Covid 19 and the Ukraine war. However, discussions are ramping up again and the second item on the agenda to be discussed at Expert Group Animal Nutrition meeting on 4 October 2023 is the modification of certain limits for undesirable substances in particular for arsenic, cadmium, lead, rye ergot and dioxins, technical adjustments for persistent organic pollutants and coccidiostats and the introduction of new limits for Nickel, THC and p-phenetidine.

We will keep you updated on any decisions made.

MRLs for feed – deletion of footnote 1 of Annex 1

The SCoPAFF ‘phytopharmaceuticals – pesticide residues’ discussed deletion of footnote 1 of Annex 1 of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005. This footnote relates to exemption of products meant exclusively for feed from maximum residue levels (MRLs). The EU Commission stressed that there were only 2 options on the table at this point in time - deleting footnote 1 completely or keeping it and drafting guidance on its application. As there is no specific MRLs for feed, and the Commission has said that these will not be established due a lack of resources, FEFAC is concerned that deleting Footnote 1 would create legal uncertainty and would economically damage feed materials suppliers and compound feed manufacturers. So far, only 6 Member States have shared their views on the topic, which is not enough for the EU Commission to choose one or the other option.

Member States were asked to communicate their position in writing by 16 October, but the EU Commission is concerned that it will still take a number of months before they get clarity on the preferred option.

IGFA has been in touch with the Pesticide Division of DAFM for their views.

Harvest 2023/2024 - Aflatoxin B1 Risk Profile in Maize (By-Products)

As a result of the evaluation of the available analysis results of Aflatoxin B1 in maize GMP+ International, together with other accepted scheme holders, has adjusted the risk profile for Aflatoxin B1 as follows :

- Ukraine - raised from low to medium - means Ukraine must be analyzed more frequently)
- Czech Republic - raised from low to medium - means Czech Republic must be analyzed more frequently)
- Southern France - raised from low to medium (this concerns the departments 85, 79, 86, 17, 16, 87, 23, 19, 03, 63, 15, 43, 71, 39, 42, 69, 01, 74, 73, 38, 07, 26, 24, 33, 40, 64, 47, 46, 82, 32, 65, 31, 81, 12, 09, 48, 30, 34, 11, 66, 05, 04, 06, 83, 84 and 13) – means Southern France must be analyzed more frequently
- France - other departments remains low

This new risk profile takes effect as from 18 September 2023. For more details see [GMP+ Aflatoxin Protocol & TS 1.7 Monitoring - Appendix](#) or consult your own certification body

Other News

Brexit Webinar - New UK Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Import Control Requirements

The Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM) will run an information webinar on Wednesday 11th October 2023, from 11.00-12.00 titled “New UK Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Import Control Requirements for Irish/EU Agri-food Goods exported to Great Britain (GB)”. The aim of the webinar is to outline changes to the UK import regime which will apply to exports of Irish/EU agri-food goods to Great Britain (GB) from 31 January 2024 and highlight the key steps businesses exporting to GB should take to prepare for these changes which will impact Ireland/GB agri-food trade.



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

The webinar is recommended for any business exporting agri-food products to GB [Registration \(gotowebinar.com\)](#).