

General News



Season’s Greetings

The IGFA team would like to thank members for all their support in 2023. We hope you all have a Peaceful and Happy Christmas and a wonderful 2024.

IGFA Annual Dinner 2024

The IGFA Annual Dinner will be held on Thursday 25 January 2024 at the Crowne Plaza Dublin Airport Hotel, Santry, Dublin 9. We look forward to seeing you there. You can download the booking form [here](#) the guidance document [here](#). Document password is the same as the website password.

EU Agricultural Outlook 2023-2035

The 2023 EU Agricultural Outlook conference was held in Brussels at the start of December and a report was published on the EU Agricultural Outlook 2023-2035. The report looks at the wider developments likely to impact agricultural production including climate change, consumer trends, trade, and macroeconomic conditions. There are chapters on each sector and on arable crops it highlights that despite the impact of climate change and the affordability of some inputs, ‘yields of cereals and oilseeds are forecast to remain stable’. This is mainly due to the adoption of new practices such as precision farming and likely to be supported by technological improvements. The report adds that cereal production is expected to continue to be driven by wheat and maize and that production of pulses and soya beans will also increase in the EU, supported by EU policies favouring protein crops, crop rotation and increasing needs for plant proteins.

Regarding animal feed, the report says that demand for animal feed in the EU is forecast to fall by - 3.5 % by 2035 ‘due to reductions in the EU’s production of pigmeat, beef and also a decline in the dairy herd. A drop in crop-based feed is also expected due to a shift towards more grass-based (extensive) production systems, and towards more efficient feed conversion ratios (which are likely to be improved via genetics and better-targeted feeding systems)’. The report highlights that the demand for high-protein feed is falling the fastest (demand is set to fall 6% by 2035 compared with 2021-2023), adding that this is motivated by lower demand due to consumer concerns about both the environment (such as deforestation) and the climate more generally (such as concerns around imports of soya meals for use in feed). For the full 82 page report see EU [Agricultural Outlook 2023-35 report \(europa.eu\)](#).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Igfa Annual Dinner 2024	1
Eu Agricultural Outlook 2023-2035	1
Ukraine Update	2
EU-US Trade	2
Nitrates 220	2
EU Deforestation Regulation	2
Cop 28	2
On-Farm Use Of Veterinary Medicinal Products	3
Feed Additives Guidance	3
Q&A On Notification To Poison Centres	3

Read the latest Teagasc Signpost newsletter [here](#)

Read Lyons Systems Research Notes [here](#)



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Ukraine Update

Agriculture Commissioner Wojciechowski spoke to agri ministers in December about the ongoing impacts of the war in Ukraine on EU and global markets. He noted that although work continues on restoring operations on the Danube and developing a safe maritime corridor from Black Sea ports, it remains fragile and insecure. As a result, continuous investment to increase the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the solidarity lanes is a priority. He said that “Ukraine will be looking to export about 59 million tonnes of grains, oilseeds & derived products to the world,” and that some of these were destined for the EU. He added that every effort should be made to get these exports to those parts of the EU, such as Spain, where they are needed, while avoiding grain remaining in neighbouring countries or parts of the EU that do not require it.

In related developments, the European Commission continues to urge Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia to lift their import restrictions on Ukrainian grain saying that they could face infringement proceedings. These import restrictions were put in place as a number of neighbouring countries stressed that Ukrainian imports were not moving throughout the EU and beyond and remaining on their markets, creating downward pressure on national grain prices. In December, Polish truckers blockaded border crossings with Ukraine and were joined by farming organisations in an effort to keep Ukrainian grain off Polish markets. The blockade created chaos as trucks stretched for kilometres at the border and political leaders scrambled to ease the standoff.

Industry bodies have also written to the commission requesting the introduction of import thresholds and systems to ensure that Ukrainian products reach their intended destinations. In a letter from 5 EU associations representing the EU Poultry, Eggs, Sugar, Maize and Farmers Association, they highlight that action is needed if their sectors are to survive. They say that volumes that used to be exported from Ukraine to third countries are now staying in the EU, causing damage to the EU market. They emphasise that EU producers must be protected and the need to ensure that compliance with the required phytosanitary, animal welfare standards and rules on the use of antimicrobials is reinforced at border controls.

EU-US Trade – Tariffs Remain Suspended

In 2018 the Trump administration-imposed tariffs on steel (25%) and aluminium (10%) imports, mainly targeting cheap imports from China, but also affecting European exports. The EU responded by imposing tariffs on US imports – a 25% tariff on sensitive US goods such as whiskey, motorcycles and also US corn. IGFA worked with FEFAC and repeatedly called for the suspension of tariffs on US corn, mainly to relieve pressure on the EU feed grain market. In October 2021 the Biden Administration and the EU agreed to end their trade dispute on steel and aluminium leading to a suspension of tariffs, including the 25% duty on US corn.

The decision was put in place until 31 December 2023 and there was concern at the start of December that the deadline was approaching and that the tariffs might be reintroduced. FEFAC, along with many other industry bodies, issued a press statement warning of the uncertainty this was creating and calling on the EU and US to permanently remove retaliatory tariffs on products unrelated to the steel and aluminium disputes. On 19 December the EU announced its decision to extend until 31 March 2025 the suspension of its rebalancing tariffs on US products in the context of the steel and aluminium dispute. They added that ‘This prolonged suspension of tariffs gives businesses on both sides of the Atlantic certainty, facilitating the smooth flow of trade’.

Environment News

Nitrates 220

On 1 December DAFM published an updated FAQs document on the Nitrates derogation. Members will know that due to water quality concerns, we are obliged to move to a reduced derogation limit of 220 kg N/ha from January 2024. The document provides answers relating to the Nitrates Derogation and the reduction in the maximum limit for derogation farmers. Download the FAQs document [here](#).

Latest on EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

The EUDR came into force on the 29 June 2023 and is designed to ensure that EU imports do not contribute to worldwide deforestation. It covers a range of products including palm oil and soy and requires that only products that are deforestation free are allowed to be imported or exported from the EU market. There are still many unanswered questions on how some very technical aspects of the EUDR will be implemented by member states, third countries and companies. Fefac, in partnership with other associations wrote again to the Commission on 5 December highlighting that many practical implementation questions and legal uncertainties are awaiting urgent clarification. The letter emphasises that ‘companies and producers need assurances that the new procedures and solutions they are investing in are in line with the

requirements of the EUDR' and that the EUDR needs to be practical and workable. Although gaps remain, the Commission published new, more extensive FAQs on the EUDR. It is available [here](#).

COP28 Climate Change Summit: Launch of Dairy Methane Action Alliance

Six of the world's largest dairy companies - Bel Group, Danone, General Mills, Kraft Heinz, Lactalis USA and Nestlé, have joined a [Dairy Methane Action Alliance](#) under the umbrella of the Environmental Defence Fund. The companies commit to transparently account for and publicly disclose the total methane emissions associated with their dairy supply chains. They also each pledge to create a public methane action plan by the end of 2024 to drive down methane emissions in their dairy supply chains. The Environmental Defence Fund will take a leading role in providing support for farmers and companies through cutting-edge research on innovative solutions to changing cows' diets and improving how manure is managed. The Dairy Methane Action Alliance is part of the COP28 Global Methane Pledge, agreed on 4 December 2023. The COP28 also included a [Food & Agriculture Declaration](#), signed by 134 countries.

Technical News

On-Farm Use of Veterinary Medicinal Products in Drinking Water or Top-Dressing

In parallel to the discussions on the establishment of maximum carry-over limits for antimicrobials in non-target feed, the EU Commission has released a [draft delegated act for public consultation](#) regarding on-farm use of veterinary medicinal products in drinking water or top-dressing.

The main points in the document are

- Group treatment with antimicrobial or antiparasitics permitted will only be permitted via drinking water or liquid feed.
- Mixture into or onto solid feed of antimicrobials or antiparasitics only for individual or small groups treatment.
- Possibility for Member States to restrict to individual animals only if they can justify it (availability of VMPs, access to medicated feed).
- Possibility to make use of a derogation for aquaculture in case of shortage in medicated feed or in case a treatment must start before the medicated feed is delivered.
- Only one antimicrobial per course of treatment
- Responsibility of the veterinarians to prescribe the right form of treatment depending on his/her assessment of the equipment, facilities, possibilities for individual treatment, composition of the feed (similar provisions as in article 5 of the medicated feed regulation) and level of expertise of the farmer.
- Additional national guidance possible
- Entry into application 118 months after entry into force to allow farmers to adapt to new requirements.

The main change will be for farmers practicing top dressing with antimicrobial substances, who will have to choose between investing in drinking water systems, liquid feeding systems or medicated feed. This may result on pressure on feed manufacturers in countries where medicated feed has stopped to resume production for farmers who are not in a position to invest in water systems. At a time when there will be additional constraints on medicated feed producers with changes to the carry over levels acceptable this will likely cause challenges.

Feed Additives Guidance

Scientists dealing with feed issues at EFSA have recently published the updated [guidance on user safety](#) and have launched a public consultation on their [draft Guidance on the assessment of the Efficacy of feed additives](#) with a deadline for comments on 26th of January 2024.

Q&A on Notification to Poison Centres

The joint FEFAC/FEFANA Expert Group on Chemical legislation held a conference call on 1 December 2023 to exchange information on practical issues related to the notification of hazardous premixtures to poison centres. Following this the FEFAC/FEFANA Q&A notifications to poison centres has been updated.