

EUROPEAN MARKETING LEGISLATION ON AGRO-FOOD PRODUCTS

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Abstract:

The EU marketing food products has a special meaning, the rules of the Community agro-food market is a priority for the European Commission aimed at aspects like increasing the quality of agricultural product and ensure their competitiveness in the domestic and foreign market, protecting consumer interests, sustainable agricultural development, protecting the environment. In this article we make an overview of the main European regulations on agricultural and food marketing.

Key words: *regulation of genetically modified products, agro-business marketing*

JEL classification: *M3, Q18*

1. Introduction

Rules adopted at EU level are of great importance for marketers of the Romanian organizations wishing to export to the Community market. An important area in the existing EU regulations is the food and feed products genetically modified (GM).

2. Empirical evidence

Managers in marketing departments should not ignore the importance of the European regulations. Major changes in the variables of the European marketing macro-environment - general economic development and with it, increasing the purchasing power of population, consumer demands, generated changes of consumers' requirements, the forthcoming of new heterogeneous needs and thenceforth these imprinted a specific configuration upon the agro-food product marketing : the emergence and / or development of potentially beneficial health products markets, adjusted metabolic and nutritional needs of different consumer segments.

Unlike the U.S. and other countries, EU members pay particular attention to all GM products. In 2003, the EU adopted Directive no. 1829 governing this area. Directive covers all products, food or feed containing genetically modified organisms, products containing ingredients produced from such organisms. According to EU Directive no. 1829/2003, genetically modified agro-products and feed must not:

- have adverse effects on human and animal health or the environment;
- mislead the consumer;
- vary in relation to food or feed products they replace, to such an extent that their normal consumption would be nutritionally disadvantageous to consumers/ animal.

It is believed that EU directive stipulates a uniform and transparent procedure for marketing applications. The procedure aims both genetically modified organisms and food and feed products derived from them.

From a legal point of view, only 16 GMOs have been authorized to be marketed in the EU (see Table 1).

Table 1

Genetically modified food products approved in the European Union

Crop	Applicant	Characteristics	Potential uses in food products	Date	Legislation
Soy	Monsanto	Protection against insects and tolerance to herbicides	Soy foods. Among these products are parts of the following: soy beverages, tofu, soy oil, soy flour, and lecithin.	03.04.1996	Dir. 90/220/EEC – Art. 13
Corn	Cyba-Geigy	Protection against insects and tolerance to herbicides	Corn products. Among them entered the following: grain, oil, cornmeal, sugar, and syrup.	23.01.1997	Dir. 90/220/EEC – Art. 13
Rapeseed oil	AgrEvo	Tolerance to herbicides	Rapeseed oil. Products made with rapeseed oil may include fried food products, baked goods and snack products.	24.06.1997	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Rapeseed oil	Plant Genetic Systems	Tolerance to herbicides		24.06.1997	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Rapeseed oil	Plant Genetic Systems	Tolerance to herbicides		24.06.1997	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Rapeseed oil	Monsanto	Tolerance to herbicides		21.11.1997	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Corn	Monsanto	Protection against insects	Derived from corn. These may include: corn oil, cornmeal, sugar, and syrup. Products made from corn derivatives may include snack items, baked goods, fried goods, confectionery and soft drinks.	06.02.1998	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Corn	AgrEvo	Tolerance to herbicides		06.02.1998	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Corn	Novartis	Protection against insects		06.02.1998	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Corn	Pioneer	Protection against insects		23.10.1998	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Rapeseed oil	Hoechst/AgrEvo	Tolerance to herbicides	Rapeseed oil. Products made with rapeseed oil may include fried products, baked goods and snack products.	08.11.1999	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Rapeseed oil	Hoechst/AgrEvo	Tolerance to herbicides		08.11.1999	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Rapeseed oil	Plant Genetic Systems	Tolerance to herbicides		26.04.2000	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Cotton	Monsanto	Tolerance to herbicides	Cottonseed oil. Products made with cottonseed oil may include fried products, baked goods	19.12.2002	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Cotton	Monsanto	Protection against insects		19.12.2002	Reg. (EC) 258/97 – Art. 5
Bacillus	F. Hoffman – La			23.03.2000	Reg. (EC)

subtilis	Roche	Riboflavin	and snack products. Vitamin B2.		258/97 – Art. 5
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Nine other genetically modified agricultural products are under authorization in the European Union. These nine items are seven varieties of corn, a sugar beet and a soybean. Applicants for permits are the following organizations: Syngenta, Monsanto, Pioneer, and AgrEvo. This information is needed by both food producers and marketing decision-makers to assure a better position for their products on the EU market.

Makers and experts in food products marketing must also take into account the EU Directive no. 1830/2003.

This directive introduces a harmonized system for tracing and labeling genetically modified organisms and to trace food and feed products made from genetically modified organisms. Under the directive, operators must transmit and retain information about products containing or produced from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), in each stage of the placing on the market. All food products, including soya or maize oil produced from GM soya or maize and food ingredients, such as biscuits with genetically modified corn oil, must be labeled. The label should indicate, "This product contains genetically modified organisms" or "is the product of (name of organism).

The purpose of these provisions is to inform consumers and farmers about the exact nature and characteristics of food products and feed in order to make informed choices. The same provisions are applicable to feed, including feed compound containing soy. It states that gluten feed produced from GM maize must be labeled. This provides farmers with precise information about the composition and properties of feed. Traces of GMOs in ordinary foodstuffs and feed may occur during cultivation, harvest, transport and processing. Experts are unanimous in believing that you cannot achieve 100% pure products. Consequently, the EU Directive no. 1830/2003 lays down certain threshold levels in labeling. Thus, the presence of GM material in conventional food products must not be specified on the label, if the ratio is less than 0.9% and it can prove that is incidental and unavoidable under the technical aspect.

It is considered a reality, accidental or unintentional presence of GM material in food products originating from the EU and third countries. In this context, the EU Directive no. 1830/2003 allows the presence of genetically modified organisms which have been assessed within a risk assessment, by Scientific Committees that inform the European Commission or the European Agrifood Safety, as not being dangerous for environment or health, but is pending approval. Their presence is allowed up to the maximum of 0.5%. Below this level are not required traceability and labeling. Above this level is forbidden to place products on the market. The regulation limits the application of the threshold level to a period of three years and plans to be publicly available a detection method.

Consistent with the general provisions of European labeling, the directive does not stipulate the need to label products as meat, milk or eggs from animals fed genetically modified feed or treated with genetically modified medicinal products. An important aspect of marketing activity is regulate imports of GMOs. The European Union is a signatory to the Cartagena Protocol of the UNEP, on Bio-safety. The Protocol took effect on September 11, 2003. The purpose of this agreement the United Nations Environment is to establish common rules on cross-border movements of GMOs, to ensure, at global scale, protection of biodiversity and human health. In June 2003, EU adopted Directive on cross-border movement of GMOs.

In addition to these regulations, which relate to certain aspects of food products marketing, along with various other aspects of production and circulation of these

products, under EU, law regulations are focused on certain categories of agricultural products marketing.

Results of quality policy, the hallmarks of quality, used in the European Union undoubtedly have a coupon. Inclusion of these signs on packaging food products is a guarantee of product quality but also the prestige manufacturer. These distinctive signs are: protected geographical indication (PGI), designations of origin (PDO), attestation of specificity (AS) and organic agriculture - a system of control.

Entry of PGI and PDO is designed to protect food products, in an effort to help rural areas by promoting products that have features related to a particular geographical area consumer information, harmonization of existing systems in Europe. These relate strictly to agricultural products and certain food commodities for which there is a link between product characteristics and geographical origin.

Protected designation of origin "is the name of a region, an area (area) determined or a country, used to indicate a product originating from that geographical area and the quality or characteristics are essentially or exclusively assigned to specific geographical environment."

Geographical indication means the name of a region, an area (area) determined or a country, used to indicate a product originating from that geographical area and the quality or reputation attributable to (a) the geographical environment, including natural factors and / or human factor. "

PGI and PDO are registered at Community level (but can be obtained from companies outside the EU, in similar circumstances). Application letter addressed to the PGI or PDO Member State in which geographical area is located, it will verify compliance and transmit, then to the European Commission and other Member States. Bodies designated by Member States perform the control of the correlation between the requirements included in product specifications. Names are entered in a special register of the Commission and published in the Official Journal. The registration procedure allows objections (if non-specification requirements) or withdrawal.

For example, Romania has obtained upon completion of negotiations on Chapter "Agriculture" from June 4, 2004 recognition and protection of origin and geographical designations: Plum 13 spirits and "brandy", "Horinca" and "cake"; 5 distilled spirits of wine and "brandy", 7 types of milk, 3 kinds of yogurt, 1 buttermilk, 4 kinds of cheese, 55 different types of cheese ; 1 type of sausage (Sibiu), 1 type of meat (Pleșcoi) 2 types of bread, 2 types of pretzels, 1 type of pie, 1 jam.

Certificates of specificity means, at an European level, recognition of an item or group of elements through which an agricultural product, such as food or merchandise, clearly differs from other products or similar goods. Certificates of specificity, helps ensure and promote traditional products, helping rural areas, a better information to consumers. To obtain certification of specificity, food must be made from traditional materials, has a traditional composition or a method of manufacturing production to reflect the traditional type.

Application for certificate of registration to obtain specificity is addressed to the Member State where the geographical area is located in, and at that level will be ascertained in accordance with specific requirements of the specification. Subsequently, the competent authority of the Member State sends the Commission's request that, if favorable, proceed to registration in a register and published in the Official Journal.

Right application of the term "organic farming - a system of control" is achieved if agricultural products are the results without using synthetic chemicals, ensure environmental and animal protection, shall comply with the approved specifications and conditions of production are controlled, 95% of ingredients are organic.

Supporting the promotion of traditional products is a feature of policy at EU level. Taking the case of Romania for example, from 2007 EU co-financed by up to 50%, information and promotion programs for agricultural products, both within and outside the Community market.

Products eligible for such financial assistance must comply with EU requirements regarding quality, hygiene, food safety and security, labeling, environmental protection.

Of Romanian products which will receive money for promotion include: Pleșcoi sausages, pretzels of Bacau and Buzau, plum jam, Bihor brandy, Zalau brandy, Transylvania brandy, Maramures brandy, etc.. These funds can be obtained for: promotion, advertising, public relations, participation in fairs, exhibitions and other events of European significance or national information campaigns on: recognition and protection of origin designations, geographical indications, traditional features guaranteed, organic products, quality and labeling systems, the EU system of quality wines produced in specific regions.

3. Conclusions

Directives listed are just some of the European regulations that impact the Romanian organizations producing and distributing food products, as exporting to the EU market.

Strategic and tactical coordinates of marketing policy must reference the regulations that establish tangible and intangible characteristics of food products, which can be intra-or international trade relations between third countries and EU members.

Apparently less relevant for policy makers and marketing professionals, such legislation aim major components of marketing mix such as product and communication, which must be designed to meet the demands of European consumers and meet consumer protection needs.

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