

PRESS RELEASE

Mandatory COOL cost burden for bulk commodities outweighs the benefits to consumers

Brussels, 5 November 2014

The EU Primary Food Processors¹ organised a Roundtable at the European Parliament to address the issue of extending mandatory Country-Of-Origin Labelling (COOL) to staple foods such as flour, sugar, vegetable oil, cocoa, starch or vegetable proteins. The EU Primary Food Processors will be heavily impacted by an extension of mandatory COOL requirements to their products and support thus keeping the current EU voluntary origin labelling rules.

Mandatory origin labelling is likely to make the food supply chain more complex and the final products more costly to the consumers. Speaking at the Roundtable, MEP Renate Sommer underlined that this was the reason why the European legislator asked the Commission to do an impact assessment on costs and benefits prior to a possible mandatory COOL labelling of unprocessed foods and main food ingredients: "we need to know whether this would be feasible in practice or not."

Mr Gary Sharkey, PFP President, highlighted the fact that "EU Primary Food Processors all work on the basis of a continuous process which requires a continuous supply of agricultural raw materials coming from different origins, which vary according to availability". Pointing out that "origin labelling should not be confused with traceability requirements that already guaranty safe products on the EU market", Mr Sharkey stressed that blends of agricultural raw materials from different origins are a key step in the process and showed the challenges of turning away from this practice. Adding that the "mandatory origin labelling for PFP products would be of little informative value or meaningless, and may even prove to be misleading by wrongly suggesting that these products possess special characteristics when all similar products have the same characteristics", he identified four direct impacts for EU first processors (impacts on sourcing, storage, processing and labelling) and pointed to the additional consequences for the environment, the current trade flows, as well as ultimately for EU consumers' purchasing power. The PFP President called for origin labelling to remain voluntary for bulk commodities.

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For more information please visit www.pfp-eu.org

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¹ The EU Primary Food Processors represent the interest of the EU cocoa, flour, starch, sugar, vegetable oils and fats, and vegetable protein industries. Our sectors deliver single-ingredient products to consumers and supply food ingredients to second-processing industries.