



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 14 September 2012

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**AGRI 586
CODEX 20**

NOTE

from:	Presidency
to:	Council
Subject:	Ractopamine Decision by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in Rome - Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency, on the abovementioned subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 25 September 2012.

Ractopamine

At its 35th session in Rome (2-7 July 2012), the Codex Alimentarius Commission has adopted a standard setting maximum residue levels (MRLs) for ractopamine in beef and pork meat.

Ractopamine is a growth promoter belonging to the family of beta-agonists: it has an anabolic effect which significantly increases muscle mass while decreasing the fat content of carcasses. Since 1996, the use of growth promoters and the import of meat from animals treated with these substances are strictly prohibited in the EU.

This standard has been adopted by the Codex Alimentarius through a vote, with a very limited majority (69 against 67 votes). The EU and several delegations - other European countries, but also China, India, Russia, many African and Asian countries - were strongly opposed to this vote and this adoption, on the grounds of persisting scientific uncertainty about the safety of products derived from animals treated with ractopamine and opposition to the use of veterinary drugs as growth promoters. This aspect has been emphasized by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in its opinion of 2009, which challenged the data and methodology used by the joint FAO/WHO experts to calculate the average daily intake.

This new standard could lead some third Countries to question the EU policy, since Codex standards are usually considered as benchmarks in the framework of the SPS agreement of the WTO.

In order to defend the interest of EU consumers and promote a more consensual approach to international standardization, at its meeting on 7 September 2012, Coreper gave a mandate to the Codex Alimentarius WP to examine this issue in close cooperation with the Commission and start identifying the next steps that the EU will have to take.

The Council will have the chance to consider the outcome of this work in a forthcoming meeting.