



Bridges Trade BioRes

Biweekly news, events and resources at the intersection of trade and biodiversity

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FISHERIES

EC Pushes for European Fisheries Reform

Major cuts in EU fisheries catches are needed to make the industry sustainable, the European Commission (EC) says. According to the Commission's Green Paper on the Reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), overfishing in European waters is rampant and several institutional shortcomings stand in the way of industry reform.

According to the Paper, 88 percent of EU commercial fish stocks are overfished – in contrast to the global average of 25 percent. It also points out that 30 percent of fish stocks are unable to reproduce at a normal rate because the parent stocks have been depleted; environmentalists say these could be unrecoverable.

“European fish stocks have been overfished for decades and the fishing fleets remain too large for the available resources,” the Paper reads. “This combination means that too many vessels chase too few fish and many parts of the European fleet are economically unviable.”

Existing policies no match for new fishing technologies

While the size of the EU fleet is estimated to be two to three times larger than what is needed, the Commission does not suggest an across-the-board percentage cut for the industry. Instead, it says that cuts would need to vary depending on the type of fish being caught.

Joe Borg, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said that existing policies have been moderately successful in some areas. However, he said, because the development and adoption of

new harvesting technologies have largely 'neutralised' conservation efforts, the industry needs to be completely rethought.

"We are asking questions even on the fundamentals of the current policy and should leave no stone unturned," Borg said. "We are not looking for just another reform. It is time to design a modern, simple and sustainable system for managing fisheries in the EU, which is able to last well into the 21st century."

EU institutional reform needed for environment issues

Institutional problems cited by the EC include a lack of precise policy objectives, a decision-making system that is too centralised and focused on short-term solutions, a framework that does not give sufficient responsibility to the industry, and the absence of political will towards compliance with the fishing limitations.

One suggestion for revamping the system would have licenses issued to fishermen individually, rather than the current practice of distributing fishing quotas to EU member states, which are then passed on to domestic fleets. Because licences would be distributed one time directly, the proposal suggests that industry would be encouraged to engage in more sustainable practices.

However, some critics say this liberalised system would harm small-scale fishermen, as it would force them to compete with commercial industry.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is urging the Commission to look to Alaska, New Zealand and Norway for positive examples of long-term fisheries management.

Environmental groups say radical change needed

WWF lauded the Paper, calling it 'commendably honest'. But the green group points out that the research demonstrates that radical reform is indeed needed to save Europe's fish stocks.

"The Commission have produced an admirably honest critique of a dysfunctional fisheries policy,"

said Aaron McLoughlin, Head of European Marine Programme at WWF. "EU countries and the Commission have let the opportunity of the 2002 reform slip away and failed to deliver on what they signed up to" (for more on the EU 2002 fisheries reform see Bridges Trade BioRes, 23 January 2003, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/8750/>).

The WWF points to Mediterranean bluefin tuna as an example of mismanagement. In November 2008, environmentalists slammed the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) for setting bluefin tuna catch limits higher than the organisation's own scientists had recommended (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 28 November 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/34718/>).

A recent WWF analysis predicts that the population of breeding tunas will disappear by 2012 if current practices continue.

Other environmental groups acknowledged the move as positive but used the opportunity to censure the unsustainable system.

"Today we are left to deal with stocks fished down to depletion," said Xavier Pastor, Oceana's European director before listing a series of problems inherent in the current system. "Recovery plans unable to serve their aim, unmanaged overcapacity, poor environmental compliance, low profitability of the EU fisheries industry, governance structure failing in their accountability to common interests, perverse subsidies and incentives, insufficient monitoring and control, unsustainable loss of biodiversity."

Greenpeace said the Commission initiative offered a possible last chance to reform a 'rotten policy'.

EC seeks stakeholder input

The Green Paper is designed to analyse current policy and launch a broad public consultation on how shortcomings should be tackled. Stakeholders from the fisheries industry, academia, civil society, and other interested parties are invited to respond to the Paper until 31 December 2009.

The EC says the consultation is the first step towards bringing about radical reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, but strong opposition is expected. A recent protest by French fishermen over quotas they say are too strict saw them blockade three English Channel ports. The blockades were only lifted after additional subsidies of €4 million were promised.

Additional Information

The Green Paper can be accessed here: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0163:FIN:EN:PDF>.

Reaction to the Green Paper can be submitted here: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/consultation_en.htm.

ICTSD Reporting; "EU fishing policy not working, says commission," EU OBSERVER, 23 April 2009; "Honest EU analysis points to fisheries failure," WWF MEDIA RELEASE, 22 April 2009; "EU commission urges fishing cuts," BBC NEWS, 21 April 2009.

CLIMATE CHANGE

China Not Satisfied with US Progress on Climate Change

Despite a recent proposal that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions well beyond what was expected, US climate change efforts do not go far enough, China's climate change delegation head, told Xinhua News in a recent interview following a meeting of the Major Economies Forum.

Members Forum met in Washington DC from 21-22 April to discuss difficult trade and climate-related issues which are threatening to derail plans for an international framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. During these meetings, which were requested by Obama, Su Wei was critical of the US, claiming that America's strategy for reducing greenhouse house gas emissions is ineffectual.

China wants more from US emissions reductions, tech transfer

Obama has called for a 15 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, back to 1990s levels, and the new Waxman-Markey bill being passed through Congress calls for a 20 percent emissions reduction by 2020 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 3 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/44634/>). Still, China insists that these proposed cuts are not large enough to prevent the potentially devastating effects of climate change and they do not allow adequate room for the economic growth of developing countries.

At a recent UN climate change conference in Bonn, Germany, Su and climate change advisor Xu Huaqing demanded that US emissions be cut by 40 percent below 1990s levels by 2020 (see Bridges Trade BioRes 3 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/44630/>). In Washington, however, Su was more specific, insisting that the US increase its transfer of climate change mitigation and adaptation technology to China, and calling for greater US-China collaboration on the research and development of future technology.

Border tax suggestion stokes fire

Relations between China and the US have been especially strained recently due to speculation that the US would impose a border tax on imported goods from large developing countries like China who do not meet certain emissions targets (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/45217/>). A border tax would protect domestic industries having to comply with emissions regulations from cheaper foreign imports, like those from China, that have less stringent emissions standards.

China strongly opposes a border tax and believes that its economy should not be penalised, but rather the countries that purchase carbon-intensive goods from China, such as the US, should be held accountable.

Calling the tax a protectionist measure, Su declared that any border tax would result in a trade war. However, on April 27, US Trade

Representative Ron Kirk and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke met with Chinese Commerce Minister Chen Deming to sign over 30 contracts with Chinese business partners amounting to over 10 billion USD.

Kirk emphasised the importance of the US trade relationship with China. "Particularly during the current difficult global economic circumstances, both the United States and China have a tremendous stake in maintaining a vibrant, open international trading system to revive and sustain growth," Kirk said.

China playing more prominent role in climate negotiations

As the two largest emitters of greenhouse gas, the US and China have been critical of each other's lack of commitment to any emissions targets since the creation of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. However, in recent years, China has been asserting a greater role in climate change policy and negotiations.

In 2007, China initiated the National Climate Change Program to address climate change mitigation and adaptation issues and has become a major producer of environmental goods and renewable energy such as wind and solar power. Speaking of the recent meeting in Washington, UN Climate Change Secretariat Yvo de Boer said that China's efforts should be better recognised. "There is a disconnect...in some countries, the fact that the Chinese are acting on climate change is hugely underappreciated," de Boer said.

The US has taken bigger steps towards implementing climate change policy under the Obama administration, but it is unlikely that the current Waxman-Markey bill will pass through Congress without major revision, and like Su, de Boer also stated that the US emissions target is not enough. Still, the US has shown a greater willingness to compromise with developing countries, though most progress thus far has been in the form of rhetoric without any tangible plan for action.

Forum hopes to help reach consensus in Copenhagen

The Major Economies Forum, which comprises Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, and the US, continued their climate change negotiations in Washington in preparation for the December COP-15 in Copenhagen. As the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, these developed and developing countries have significant a stake in climate change policy since it will alter their trade relationships and likely burden their economies.

China and other developing countries have requested billions of dollars in aid from developed countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation technologies as well as a removal of trade barriers that prevent technology transfer. Though China is a fast-growing economy, implementation of clean technology will be very expensive.

China says the US and other developed countries have a responsibility to help developing countries finance their climate change strategies. However, no agreement has been reached on these issues, and delegates at the meeting in Washington ran out of time to discuss financial matters. More meetings of the Forum are scheduled in the coming months before Copenhagen, which will be critical since negotiations continue to be mostly words without any specific plan of action.

Todd Stern, the US special envoy for climate change said the meeting made him cautiously optimistic. "I come out of this meeting if anything a bit more optimistic...that does not change the fact that the issues are extremely difficult, that it's not going to be easy to reach an agreement."

ICTSD Reporting; "SU Wei: U.S. progress is not big enough," CHINA CLIMATE CHANGE INFO-NET, 29 April 2009; "U.S. climate talks make progress, with some gaps." REUTERS, 28 April 2009; "US more optimistic about climate deal after talks," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 29 April 2009; "Climate-Change Policies Risk Protectionism, China, India Say," BLOOMBERG, 2 April 2009; "Top Chinese negotiator urges

developed countries to commit more in fighting climate change,” XINHUA, 1 April 2009; “U.N.’s Top Climate Change Official: A New Willingness to Tackle Emissions,” US NEWS, 29 April 2009.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Swine Flu Triggers String of Pork Import Bans

Several countries have moved to implement bans on pork products from Mexico and parts of the US as global swine flu infections continue to rise. But critics in the two countries argue that the bans are unfounded, and health officials agree the illness cannot be contracted by eating pork.

Since it was first detected in Mexico last month, swine influenza (A/H1N1) infections have spread around the globe to countries including the US, Canada, Germany, Spain, and New Zealand. The US confirmed its first swine flu-related death on 29 April.

Citing public health and safety concerns, countries such as China, the Philippines, and the United Arab Emirates have implemented bans on Mexican and US pork or pork products. Russia has gone a step further by banning all meat and meat products from Mexico and select US states.

China, Russia bans could cost over US\$1 billion per year

China, which imported US\$270 million worth of pork in 2008, imposed an immediate ban on pork from Mexico and three US states on 27 April. Officials insist that a ban is necessary to rule out any risk of facing a situation similar to the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak. According to a joint statement from the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine, any shipments already in transit would be tested for the virus before entry.

Russia, a major market for US meat exports, has implemented a more aggressive ban. In addition to implementing a ban on pork products from

Mexico and several Latin American and Caribbean countries, Rosselkhnadzor – Russia’s veterinary watchdog – has now banned imports of all types of livestock and meat products from Texas, Kansas, California, New York and Ohio.

In 2008, US meat producers exported US\$836 million worth of poultry to Russia, US\$436 million worth of pork products and US\$75 million worth of beef.

Required scientific evidence not present: USTR

Under WTO rules, health and safety bans such as these must be supported by scientific evidence. The US Trade Representative’s office was quick to point out that the current bans have not met these requirements.

“Restrictions on US pork or pork products or any meat products from the United States resulting from the recent outbreak do not appear to be based on scientific evidence and may result in serious trade disruptions without cause,” the office of the USTR said in a statement.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and other bodies have confirmed that the virus is not transmitted through consumption of infected meat.

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), a Paris-based intergovernmental organisation, released a statement saying that human cases of the flu do not justify import bans on pigs.

“There is no evidence that this virus is transmitted by food,” the OIE statement said. “Currently, only findings related to the circulation of this virus in pigs in zones of countries having human cases would justify trade measures on the importation of pigs from these countries.”

Industry pushing for renaming of flu

Analysts are predicting a global drop in demand for pork products as consumers shy away from products that could be connected to the illness. In an effort to assuage fears over eating pork, a US

farm group has mounted a campaign to rename the virus 'North American influenza'.

The renaming initiative has been supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), which announced on 30 April that it would henceforth refer to the illness by its scientific name (H1N1 influenza A). The move came as an effort to avoid confusion after Egypt began culling thousands of pigs in a misguided effort to prevent the swine flu from spreading.

"Meat export bans could seriously hurt trade-USTR," REUTERS, 27 April 2009; "Pork Industry Fights Concerns Over Swine Flu," NEW YORK TIMES, 28 April 2009; "China bans pork imports from Mexico, parts of US, AFP," 27 April 2009; "US slams Russian moves to block meat imports," Associated Press, 29 April 2009; "1st swine flu death reported in U.S. as worldwide numbers rise," CBC NEWS, 29 April 2009.

IN BRIEF

Dispute Panel Established in Tuna-Dolphin Case, Despite US Objections

The WTO's Dispute Settlement Body agreed to establish a panel to hear Mexico's complaint against US rules on 'dolphin-safe' tuna at its meeting on 20 April. The move drew criticism from Washington, which argues that the case should be adjudicated in the dispute settlement system set up under NAFTA, not the WTO.

The establishment of the panel is just the latest chapter in a dispute that dates back to the early 1990s. At issue in the case is Washington's refusal to allow Mexican tuna to be certified as 'dolphin-safe' because the country's fishermen are allowed to use encircling, or 'purse-seine', nets, which often trap dolphins along with the fish.

But Mexico contends that its fishing practices are sustainable and comply with the guidelines accepted by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), of which the US is a member. Mexico argues that the US restrictions

violate several WTO rules, including national treatment and most-favoured nation obligations, and create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. Thanks to its inability to label its tuna as dolphin safe in the US market, the country claims that more than a third of its tuna fleet has been forced to shut down.

In October of last year, Mexico made an official request for consultations with the US, the first step of the dispute settlement process at the WTO (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 31 October 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/32491/>). But the last week's establishment of a dispute panel to hear the case indicates that those consultations failed to bring about a resolution.

Washington is clearly unsatisfied with how the case is progressing. In its official statement at the 20 April meeting of the DSB, the US said that it "deeply regrets" Mexico's move to request a DSB panel, and urged the country to reconsider its position. The US delegate argued that the case should be dealt with at the regional level, in a panel set up under the North American Free Trade Agreement, not in the multilateral WTO.

The US delegate argued that, in NAFTA's Article 2005(4), the parties agreed that cases concerning the protection of the environment, or the health of humans, animals or plant life "would be heard – at the responding party's option – solely under the NAFTA's dispute settlement procedures."

"This dispute meets the criteria set out in that NAFTA provision, and the United States has the right to have this dispute considered under the NAFTA," the US delegate said.

But Mexico said it was determined to have the case heard at the multilateral level.

"This controversy has important multilateral implications that should be resolved at the WTO," the Mexican delegate said at the meeting. "Many countries have informally indicated their wish to participate in or to follow the dispute, something that would not be possible under the NAFTA. Mexico believes that the substantial concern that this dispute has generated at the international level must also be taken into account."

ICTSD reporting.

Monsanto Sues Germany over Maize Ban

Multinational agriculture giant Monsanto has followed through with its law suit against the German government over its recent decision to ban the cultivation of MON810, a strain of genetically modified maize that the firm produces. Berlin claims that its ban is based on environmental concerns, but Monsanto insists that the product, which has been approved by the EU, is safe to use.

With the announcement of the ban earlier this month, Germany became the sixth European country to prohibit the cultivation of the modified seed (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/45175/>). Austria, France, Greece, Hungary and Luxembourg have also forbidden farmers from using MON810, despite pressure from the European Commission to allow its use. The EC approved the use of the GM maize, which is designed to resist pests, more than a decade ago, but the seed is cultivated in only seven of the European bloc's 27 member countries. Germany has allowed farmers to grow MON810 since 2005.

Brad Mitchell, a spokesperson for Monsanto, told ICTSD that the company currently has no plans to launch lawsuits against the other countries that have banned MON810, but he did not rule this out. "We reserve the right to challenge any actions taken arbitrarily that would deny farmers access to technologies that can contribute to a more sustainable agriculture," Mitchell said. He said any future legal action would be determined "on a case-by-case basis."

Monsanto insists that in order for the German ban to be legal Berlin would have to present new scientific evidence that puts the safety of the product in question. Mitchell says no such evidence has been put forward.

Media sources reported that the lawsuit was filed in the administrative court in Braunschweig, roughly 200 kilometres west of Berlin.

ICTSD reporting. "Monsanto sues Germany over GMO maize ban," REUTERS, 21 April 2009.

Norway Threatens EU over Proposed Seal Ban

Norway has said it will bring a WTO challenge against the European Union if the bloc moves ahead with a proposed ban on trade in seal products. Environmentalists, who claim that the seal hunt is inherently cruel and inhumane, have long fought for such a prohibition.

"The Norwegian government has decided to initiate consultations under the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding, should the EU take a decision along the lines that now seems to be developing," Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre wrote in a letter to EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton. A copy of the letter was obtained by Reuters, which reported on it on Monday.

"In our view, the proposal cannot be justified under the WTO," the letter reads. "A ban on trade in seal products will set a dangerous precedent in the matter of sustainable harvesting of renewable resources."

Seal pelts are primarily used in the fashion industry in China, Norway and Russia, while seal blubber is used as oil and the meat is consumed. The EU imported US\$5.5 million worth of seal products in 2006.

A committee of European lawmakers voted in March in favour of a proposed ban on all seal imports into the EU, on the grounds that the hunt is inhumane. The move provoked a strong reaction from the Canadian government, which threatened WTO action against the embargo (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 6 March 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/42446/>).

This week, Norway followed suit.

But the ban, which would prohibit the import, export, and transport of any seal products throughout the 27-nation EU, still faces some

hurdles to implementation. The full European Parliament was to vote on the proposed embargo on 1 April, but that has now been pushed to the end of the month. EU governments also have to approve the measure before it takes effect.

In March, the European Parliament committee voted down a proposed exemption from the ban for countries that had proved to the EU that their hunts were conducted in a humane manner. The lawmakers determined that commercial seal hunts are 'inherently inhumane' and effective monitoring of the practice is 'impossible'.

But the committee upheld an exemption for seals hunted by Inuit communities, but only if the products are traded "as part of a non-commercial exchanges between Inuit communities for cultural, educational or ceremonial purposes."

Russia imposed its own seal ban last month, outlawing the hunting of harp seals less than one year old.

"This bloody hunting is from now on banned in our country," Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said at the time. "This is an important measure to preserve Russia's biodiversity."

ICTSD reporting; "Norway threatens action if EU bans seal products," REUTERS, 20 April 2009; "Canada seal hunt begins amid controversy," HUFFINGTON POST, 23 March 2009; "Russia's seal-hunt ban pushes Canada further into isolation," NATIONAL POST (Canada), 18 March 2009.

Sanctions Delayed Again as EU, US Continue Progress on Beef

Amid strong pressure both at home and abroad, US Trade Representative Ron Kirk agreed in a telephone conversation with his EU counterpart on 22 April to delay for two weeks the start of controversial sanctions intended to strike back against Brussels' ban on imports of hormone-treated beef. The announcement of the delay came just one day before the retaliatory measures were scheduled to take effect.

"The United States will delay the trade action until May 9, to provide a little more time to negotiate a settlement with the EU," the USTR said in a 22 April press release. "The EU has demonstrated seriousness in their efforts to solve this problem, and two additional weeks should be sufficient to establish whether we can address the remaining issues successfully."

In 1999, the WTO granted Canada and the US permission to retaliate against the EU ban with punitive tariffs. The US was authorised to sanction the European bloc US \$116.8 million annually, and has maintained tariffs on a number of mostly agricultural products for nearly a decade.

Yet as both parties continue to argue the legitimacy of their cause, and in light of unclear guidance from the global trade body, the status of the sanctions remains unclear.

In particular, an October 2008 Appellate Body ruling granted the EU the authority to continue the ban on hormone-treated beef while allowing the US to continue its sanctions – a decision that left both sides claiming victory (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 31 October 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/32483/>).

But the dispute intensified in January when the outgoing Bush administration announced the imminent enactment of rotating tariffs on EU goods that would be subject to change every six months (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 23 January 2009 <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/38544/>). The change was immediately met with strong criticism from EU leaders, who decried the 'carousel' sanctions as illegal.

At the same time, business leaders on both sides of the Atlantic increased pressure for a resolution. In the United States, more than 60 Chicago-area restaurant owners protested an expected 100 percent tariff on popular Italian mineral water, while earlier this year French farmers delivered a free wheel of Roquefort cheese to the US embassy in Paris, denouncing an expected 300 percent tariff on the pungent product.

This is the second delay for the sanctions, which were originally scheduled to take effect on 23

March but which the Obama administration pushed back to 23 April (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 20 March 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/38544/>).

The 22 April phone call between Kirk and EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton signalled that one of the oldest WTO disputes may be approaching a mutually agreeable conclusion.

“We are both aware that this is a difficult issue that affects businesses and consumers in both the European Union and the United States. We want to overcome those difficulties, and we believe that a solution is within reach that will benefit both sides,” Ashton said.

“This gives us the chance to avoid a crisis that would lead to harmful sanctions as well as more litigation at the World Trade Organisation. Together we can find a positive and lasting solution to this issue, and we will continue our close cooperation on other outstanding issues in the future,” she added.

ICTSD reporting; “US agrees to postpone duty hikes in beef hormone row: EU,” AFP, 23 April 2009; “US delays tariffs on Italian mineral water, other products,” Chicago Tribune, 22 April 2009; “French farmers raise stink over U.S. tariff on Roquefort cheese,” CBC News, 23 January 2009.

China Instigates WTO Dispute Case against US Poultry Ban

Beijing launched a WTO challenge to a US ban on Chinese poultry imports on 17 April. The request for consultations follows months of outspoken criticism from Chinese officials, who denounced the regulation before the WTO’s Agriculture Committee last month (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 20 March 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/43671/>).

At issue is a ban on Chinese poultry that has been in place since the avian flu outbreak of 2004. Fearing the spread of the virus, both nations closed their borders to each others’ poultry, pledging to lift the ban in the future. Months later China resumed imports, but the US continued its

ban, asserting that poor sanitary conditions in Chinese processing centres pose a health risk to US consumers.

But for China, a critical threshold was crossed on 11 March, when President Obama signed into law a federal budget that specifically forbids imports of Chinese poultry products. The clause that spells out the ban, Section 727, provoked a harsh response from Chinese trade officials, who denounced it and the ongoing ban as clearly discriminatory, vowing WTO recourse if the measure was not eliminated.

The announcement of China’s request for consultations on the matter – the first of many steps in the process of resolving disagreements among WTO Members – drew a measured response from Washington. “WTO dispute settlement is a normal and constructive mechanism to allow trading partners to resolve their differences,” Deborah Mesloh, spokeswoman for the office of the US Trade Representative, told Bridges. “We have received China’s request for consultations and are studying it.”

The complaint was welcomed by some within the US, notably the National Chicken Council, a US industry group.

“We agree that China’s decision to initiate a WTO settlement process is appropriate, although it is unfortunate that this issue has not already been resolved. Our position all along has been that USDA should make science-based decisions when countries apply to export poultry products to the United States,” said a 17 April press release from the NCC.

Washington continues to assert that the embargo is justified under the WTO’s Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, which allows countries to establish safety requirements based on scientific evidence.

“We have a series of very critical food safety issues in China that need to be addressed,” said US Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro in March.

It has long been Beijing’s position, however, that the US ban is protectionist and has no scientific

basis. Chinese poultry production meets international standards that have been accepted by the European Union, Japan and Switzerland.

In related news, just two days after filing their WTO complaint, China's government-run news agency, Xinhua, confirmed a new outbreak of the H5N1 bird flu at a wholesale market in the Tibetan city of Lhasa, leading to the culling of approximately 1,700 chickens. Earlier this year a similar outbreak led to the infection of 1,330 birds and the culling of approximately 12,000 more.

ICTSD reporting; "China Confirms Bird Flu Outbreak in Lhasa," XINHUA, 19 April 2009; "China hauls US to WTO over poultry," AFP, 18 April 2009; "China hauls US to WTO in 1st case vs. Obama admin," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 17 April 2009; "China slashes U.S. measure of banning Chinese poultry import," XINHUA, 17 April 2009; "China Culls 13,000 Poultry After Bird-Flu Outbreak," BLOOMBERG, 11 February 2009.

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Events

Coming up in the next two weeks (1-15 May)

4-15 May, New York, US. SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. With 53 member states, the CSD was established in 1992 to ensure effective implementation of the UN Conference on Environment and Development. This year's session, hosted at UN Headquarters in New York will focus on Africa, agriculture, draught and desertification, as well as land and rural development. For more information contact: Division for Sustainable Development; fax: + 1 212 963 4260; Internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd/dsd_contact.shtml.

4-8 May, Geneva, Switzerland. FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS. The fourth meeting of the

Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) will consider for the first time in the history of the COP the addition of nine new chemicals for addition to the annexes of the Convention. Also slated for discussion is technical assistance, information exchange, and measures to reduce or eliminate the intentional and unintentional release of POPs. For more information contact: Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8729; fax: +41-22-917-8098; Internet: <http://chm.pops.int/>

5 May, New York, US. FARMING FIRST: ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AGRICULTURE. A side event at the start of the Seventeenth Session of the Commission for Sustainable Development, the objective of this meeting is to discuss sustainable agriculture which is both economically feasible and socially responsible. The event will host several experts in a roundtable discussion and is open to all UN delegates and UN-accredited journalists. For more information contact: Farming First; e-mail: info@farmingfirst.org; Internet: www.farmingfirst.org

7-8 May, Calgary, Canada. SUSTAINING ROBUST CITIES IN A CHANGING ENERGY FUTURE. Bringing together leaders in industry, business, policy, and education, this conference will attempt to disseminate the energy expertise of Calgary in a forum designed to assist urban planning and development in all cities. Major themes include: directions in North American energy use; impacts on land use, and urban systems in a changing energy regime. For more information contact: Geoff Gosson; tel: +1-250-858-4600; fax: +1-250-384-0953; e-mail: info@gaininggroundsummit.com; Internet: <http://www.gaininggroundsummit.com/calgary2009/index.htm>

11-15 May, Manado, Indonesia. WORLD OCEAN CONFERENCE 2009. A forum to discuss current issues in the marine field, this event will focus on climate change impacts, the role of oceans in regulating climate change, adaptation and mitigation measures, and opportunities for regional and international cooperation. For more information contact:

WOC'09 Secretariat; tel: +62 431 861 152; fax: +62 431 861 394; e-mail: info@woc2009.org; Internet: <http://www.woc2009.org/home.php>.

15-16 May, London, UK. EBRD ANNUAL MEETING AND BUSINESS FORUM: OPPORTUNITIES IN A TOUGHER CLIMATE. This meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will examine the impact of the global economic crisis and the lessons it offers, while searching for solutions which offer sustainable economic growth. Examples of topics to be covered include: "Energy Efficiency and Climate Change: A Source of Economic Growth and Competitiveness;" "Railway and Infrastructure Investment as an Engine of Economic Growth;" and "The Commodity Trap: Weaning Countries from Commodity Dependence." Several nations will also host presentations examining country-specific investment opportunities. For more information contact: EBRD; tel: +44-20-7338-7912; fax: +44-20-7338-6102; e-mail: ngo@ebrd.com; internet: <http://www.ebrd.com/new/am/index.htm>

Other Upcoming Events

18-21 May 2009, Seoul, Korea. May 2009. C40 LARGE CITIES CLIMATE SUMMIT – SEOUL 2009. The C40 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group brings together leaders of the world's largest cities committed to taking action on climate change. This year's summit, hosted in Seoul and featuring keynote speaker William Jefferson Clinton, will include discussions on a number of issues such as the wider use of green energy, energy efficiency measures, sustainable transport, and sustainable city development. Throughout the four-day event, delegates will share best practices, build networks, identify collaborative projects and chart future actions relative to tackling climate change. For more information contact: Mr. Chul-woong CHOI; tel: 82-2-2115-7796; e-mail: c40seoul@seoul.go.kr; Internet: <http://www.c40seoulsummit.com/>

27-29 May, Barcelona, Spain. GLOBAL CARBON MARKET FAIR & CONFERENCE. This event, jointly organised by the International Emissions Trading Association, The World Bank, Fira Barcelona, and Koelnmesse, will feature debates, in-depth case studies and leadership sessions with an in-depth overview of the status of

the carbon market and international climate change negotiations. For further information, contact Lisa Spafford: tel: +41 (0) 22-737-0502; fax: +41 (0) 22-737-0508; email: spafford@carbonexpo.org; internet: www.carbonexpo.com.

2-3 June, London, UK. CARBON REDUCTION COMMITMENT SUMMIT. The CRC is a mandatory carbon trading scheme within the UK which targets emissions from around 5,000 large businesses and public sector organisations. The central focus of this conference will be ways in which those groups under the CRC can save energy and keep down costs while complying with this regulation and successfully running their respective organizations. For further information contact Adrienne Baker at adrienne.baker@greenpowerconferences.com; internet: <http://www.greenpowerconferences.com/corporateclimateresponse/crc.html>.

3-4 June, Budapest, Hungary. ENERGY TRADING CENTRAL AND SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE. The energy sector in Central and South Eastern Europe is facing an important period of change and development. The current credit and economic crisis, the ensuing fall in energy demand, regulatory disruptions and the continuing drive toward common energy market combine into a cocktail of major uncertainties and challenges for power and gas traders in this region. Power traders are grappling with declining allocations of cross border transmission capacity, while at the same time trying to understand how a change to flow based calculation and allocation may work out in future. Meanwhile the next phase of European gas market liberalisation, bringing stricter unbundling rules, may mean restructuring of the regional gas industry will gather pace. This conference will focus on these issues and others addressing traders in the region and the potential profitability of their business. For more information visit

<http://www.energytradingcsee.com>

16-18 June, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. SECOND AFRICA BIOENERGY CONFERENCE AND EXPO. This conference will bring together Ministers, Ambassadors, CEOs and stakeholders from across leading bioenergy, agriculture,

chemical and finance platforms to discuss, face-to-face, a vast range of today's most important issues while networking to set the stage for the next step in Africa's bioenergy revolution. Featuring more than 50 speakers and 450 delegates, participants will focus on issues such as current economic challenges have in many ways demonstrating the need for energy sources, the call for the development of sustainable agriculture and renewable energy programs, along with the need build up renewable energy projects and infrastructure. The Bioenergy Conference will not only showcase the newest technologies from biorefineries to gasification processes, but will also examine such pressing issues as blending technologies and infrastructure development. For information, contact the organisers: tel: +1-605-323-0119; fax: +1-605-323-0122; email: info@biofuelsconferences.com; internet: <http://www.africabiofuels.com/>

17-19 June, Venice, Italy. 2009 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY WORKSHOP. This workshop, jointly sponsored by the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change (CMCC) and the International Centre for Climate Governance, represents an informal network of analysts actively working on international energy issues. The IEW provides a venue for scholars and researchers to compare quantitative energy projections and to understand the reasons for diverging views of future developments. The workshop is structured with one plenary session per day, each one hosting two key-note speeches of international experts of the research field. Then, three parallel sessions will be held at each time slot with 3 or 4 presentations each. The aim is to select about 85 papers out of the applications. For more information please visit <http://www.iccgov.org/iew2009/2-0.htm>

22-24 June, Vienna, Austria. INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONFERENCE 2009: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED ENERGY AGENDA BEYOND 2020: SECURING SUSTAINABLE POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS. Now in its tenth year, this conference aims to provide a platform for policy makers and representatives from the private and public sectors to discuss energy issues in the context of the global financial crisis. Co-organized by UNIDO, IIASA, the

Austrian Development Cooperation and the Austrian Energy Agency, this event will stress the need for increased international cooperation and highlight the role the UN system and development partners can play in this agenda. For more information refer to: internet: <http://www.viennaenergyconference.org/>

24-27 June, Amsterdam, Netherlands. 17TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMISTS. The European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE) is an international scientific association which aims to contribute to the development and application of environmental and resource economics as a science in Europe while building cooperation between university level teaching institutions and research institutions in Europe. This meeting aims to bring together academics, policy makers, and leaders in economics, agriculture, and forestry, among others, in their seventeenth conference. For more information contact the organisers: e-mail: info@eaere2009.org; internet: www.eaere2009.org.

Resources

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy for review by the Bridges staff to Andrew Aziz at aaziz@ictsd.ch.

BIOSAFETY ASSESSMENT TOOL. By the GenØk Centre for Biosafety, April 2009. Developed over the past five years as part of a larger Norwegian project to build biosafety capacity and with contributions from researchers around the world, BAT is a free online resource designed to provide information to individuals reviewing the scientific data provided by GMO developers in support of their evaluation on safety. With the goal of simplifying and accelerating the review of highly technical evaluations provided by these developers, this database was designed to assist specialists and the general public alike with making determinations of safety, researching the topic, or making policy

decisions. The online database is now available to the public at

<https://bat.genok.org/bat/home.html>.

SUSTAINABLE JURUTI: A PROPOSED MODEL FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT. By the Getulio Vargas Foundation's Center for Sustainability Studies (GVCes), the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (Funbio) and Alcoa. In 2006, Alcoa was poised to begin a Northern Brazilian mining operation near Juruti. Noting failures of the past, the company set out with a novel approach – to make Juruti “the best mining project in the world.” Aiming for full community integration, the project sought to embrace strategies in sustainability and drew from extensive surveying and discussion. In broad terms, this publication examines the three prongs of sustainability imagined by the project: respect for the environment, social responsibility and economic success. Drawing from the lessons of the mining project, this study also sets forth guidelines for short, medium and long term local development, offering extensive insight into proposals, methods and dynamics still underway. To access this paper please refer to http://www.alcoa.com/brazil/pt/juruti_info_page/juruti_ingles.pdf.

PROGRESS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY: A REPORT CARD AND A RECOMMENDED AGENDA. By John C. Dernbach. This research paper summarizes the conclusions and recommendations of Agenda for a Sustainable America, a 2009 book which brought together over forty contributing authors and was edited by Professor Dernbach. Attempting to identify concrete steps which can be taken to advance goals of sustainability, this study presents an evaluation of the six areas in which the United States has achieved significant progress, while also identifying broad recommendations for action over the next 5-10 years. This paper is available electronically at

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1389878.