U.S. Biotech Crops Alliance

April 28, 2015

Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis
Directorate General Health and Food Safety
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 170
B-1049 Brussels

Dear Commissioner Andriukaitis,

On March 12, 2015 the undersigned organizations, representing a broad section of the U.S. food and agricultural industry, provided comments on the review of the European Union's (EU) regulatory procedure for approving the import of new biotechnology products being conducted by DG SANTE.

In our letter we stated that a number of core principles and commitments must result from this review (see attachment).

We also stated in our letter that adherence to these principles would support a number of the recently published Commission goals in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations, including:

- Pragmatic and speedy procedures and decisions on regulations related to trade;
- A single approval process for exports from all EU countries, just as there is a single approval process for U.S. exports to the EU;
- Clear and transparent processes and time lines that reflect the fact that we are each other's most important trading partner; and
- Strong mechanisms for resolving trade issues.

On April 22, 2015 the Commission proposed to amend its regulation of GM food and feed to allow Member States to adopt national decisions restricting or prohibiting the use in food or feed of GM products after they have been found to be safe for food and feed use and authorized at the EU level. *This proposal runs counter to these core principles, counter to the Commission's and its Member States' obligations under the World Trade Organization, and it substantially undermines the fundamental purpose of the TTIP negotiations.*

In addition, the proposal has been announced without any assessment of the significant negative economic impacts on international trade or for the EU, including loss of competitiveness in the EU livestock sector, increased food costs to EU consumers and loss of confidence in Europe as a place to do business. In short, failing to uphold the EU single market for the approval of safe products will impair jobs, growth, innovation and competiveness.

We strongly urge the Commission to withdraw this proposal.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Seed Trade Association

American Soybean Association

Biotechnology Industry Organization

Corn Refiners Association

National Association of Wheat Growers

National Corn Growers Association

National Grain and Feed Association

National Oilseed Processors Association

North American Millers' Association

U.S. Canola Association

U.S. Grains Council

U.S. Soybean Export Council

cc: President Jean-Claude Juncker
Vice-President Frans Timmermans
Vice-President Jyrki Katainen
Secretary-General Catherine Day
Commissioner Cecilia Malmström
Commissioner Phil Hogan
Commissioner Carlos Moedas
Commissioner Elzbieta Bienkowska
Ambassador David O'Sullivan

ATTACHMENT

U.S. Biotech Crops Alliance

Core Principles and Commitments for the European Commission Review of the European Union Regulatory Procedure for Approving the Import of Biotechnology Products

- A commitment to uphold and not fragment the EU's single-market for imported biotech crops.
- A commitment for respect of existing law while the review is underway. The review must not be used to further delay decisions on products that have completed all risk assessment and administrative procedures and only await final Commission action.
- A commitment that the result of the review shall not be retroactive and create additional delays for products in the regulatory queue.
- A commitment to ensure regulations are consistent with the EU's obligations under the WTO SPS agreement, and to meet the timeline of 18 months (from submission to approval) of GM import dossiers provided for in the current approval procedure.
- A commitment to maintain the role of the EFSA risk assessment process and to provide sufficient resources for EFSA to complete its task in a timely manner, and a commitment to develop a practical and more efficient science-based risk assessment process for stacked biotechnology events.
- A commitment to complete the review no later than the six-month deadline from installation of the new Commission (30 April 2015).
- A commitment to full transparency during conduct of the review including regular consultation with stakeholders.
- A commitment to providing for EU access to the global supply of proven safe crop products enhanced through the use of biotechnology in the interest of EU agriculture and consumers.
- A commitment to establish a policy covering the low-level presence of biotechnology traits that is commercially feasible and for the Commission to participate formally in the Global Low Level Presence Initiative.