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Bulgaria

Biotechnology

Bulgaria bans LL RICE 601

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Report Highlights:

Bulgaria transposed the EC Decision 2006/578/EC and banned imports and placing on the market of LL RICE 601 and other U.S. origin rice foods which may contain LL RICE 601. Since Bulgaria is not a traditional rice importer of U.S. rice, the trade impact is negligible.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Sofia [BU1]
[BU]

The new regulation

On November 7, 2006, Bulgarian Official Gazette # 90, published the Ministry of Health ordinance #RD 09-531 of October 26, which introduced measures against sales on the market of LL RICE 601.

This new regulation transposes EC Decision 2006/578/EC regarding "urgent measures about non permitted genetically modified organism LL RICE 601 in rice and rice products".

The regulation bans (art. 1) release on the market of any food containing LL RICE 601. In addition, a list of foods (art. 2) originating from the U.S. was introduced with the requirement that these products should be imported if accompanied by accredited laboratory certificate proving that the foods do not contain genetically modified rice LL RICE 601.

The list of rice products contains the following HS# under the EU Combined Nomenclature: CN 1006 20 15; CN 1006 20 17; CN 1006 20 96; CN 1006 20 98; CN 1006 30 25; CN 1006 30 27; CN 1006 30 46; CN 1006 30 48; CN 1006 30 65; CN 1006 30 67; CN 1006 30 96; CN 1006 30 98, CN 1006 40 00.

If the required accredited laboratory certificate is not available, the importer or its authorized representative must make a laboratory analysis of listed foods in order to prove that it does not contain genetically modified rice LL RICE 601. The shipment is released for placing on the market only upon presentation of such a certificate. Shipment of listed foods which are proved to contain LL RICE 601 are not permitted for sales on the market (art. 5).

The importer or its authorized representative pays all expenses related to the cost of necessary laboratory analysis certificates.

Directors of Regional Inspections for Prevention and Control of Public Health (Ministry of Health regional offices) have to arrange for taking samples and making tests of listed rice foods which are already on the market in order to find out if they contain LL RICE 601. The Chief Public Health Officer must prepare and send to the EC a report for every case of identified shipment of listed rice foods which contain LL RICE 601.

The implementation and execution of this regulation is assigned to the Directors of Regional Inspections for Prevention and Control of Public Health and Heads of Customs Regional Offices.

Trade Impact

The LL RICE 601 case did not have any significant impact on trade in Bulgaria. Media had only a few small articles. There was no industry reaction.

In general, Bulgaria is a net importer of rice. The U.S. is not among the traditional rice suppliers to Bulgaria. Since 2002, total rice imports to Bulgaria have been at least 20,000 MT with major suppliers Egypt, Greece, China and Italy. The U.S. exported 23 MT of rice in 2003 and 881 MT of rice in 2002. No U.S. rice has been imported to Bulgaria since 2004 to date. According to the Ministry of Agriculture forecast, total Bulgarian rice imports in 2006 are projected at 22,000 MT-24,000 MT.

Table. Bulgarian rice imports, 2002-2005, in MT, by country of origin

Bulgarian rice imports, 2002-2005, in MT, by country of origin				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
U.S.	0	0	23	881
Egypt	16,898	13,793	6,375	4,106
Greece	734	1,032	720	637
Italy	527	306	326	NA
India	275	NA	NA	NA
China	173	7,340	18,855	7,369
Macedonia	216	622	NA	NA
Thailand	164	710	540	NA
Total	19,108 (\$4.9 million)	25,522 (\$6.1 million)	27,164 (\$5.9 million)	20,148 (\$3.9 million)