



CETA: EUROPEAN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE STANDARDS UNDER THREAT

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The EU-Canada trade deal CETA will provisionally enter into force on 21 September 2017. This means that large parts of CETA will be activated before ratification by the parliaments of EU member states. However, EU member states can still choose not to ratify it, in which case CETA will be rejected in its entirety. Before our parliamentarians make their decision, they must confront a series of critical questions regarding CETA and its implications for the future of European food and agriculture.

Through CETA, the EU will become further integrated with the Canadian (and therefore by extension the US) meat industry. For example, CETA will increase the EU's quotas for imports of Canadian pork and beef 12-14 times the current levels to 75,000 tons of pork and 45,840 tons of beef.

CETA, in common with all trade agreements, will reduce tariffs to increase international trade. However, CETA goes well beyond this traditional focus, and to an unprecedented degree seeks to influence domestic policies in the EU and Canada, with the goal of reducing costs and limiting regulation. Due to CETA's focus on eliminating so-called 'non-tariff trade barriers', agricultural and food standards will be targeted. Under threat are EU food and agricultural policies (present and future) that are either stronger than Canadian rules, or which prioritise better human and health protection over more trade (Briefing Paper 1).

The rules under threat include:

- Restrictions on the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), growth hormones, and antimicrobial chemical rinses in producing meat. Canada and the US have attacked the EU ban on growth hormones in WTO dispute settlement procedures. CETA provides them with new avenues to challenge the EU's ban on growth hormones.
- Country of origin labelling (COOL) rules for meat and other food products.
- Future restrictions on cloning animals and their offspring, and their labelling and traceability in the European food system.

FOOD SAFETY UNDER THREAT BY CETA

Food systems differ significantly between Canada and the European Union. Canada has weaker food safety standards than the EU, and a farm economy more heavily dependent on chemical additives and GMOs. Regulatory cooperation fuels a race to the bottom through a process that facilitates the early and active involvement of industry lobbies, government officials supportive of these industries, and trade promotion officials in writing regulations. The focus is on cutting costs and 'red tape' – not improving health and safety.

CETA incorporates a toolbox of deregulatory measures – strongly advocated for by big corporations – that will promote the harmonisation of food safety standards to the lowest common denominator, and the weakening of the EU's risk assessment standards for food products. Moreover, the Investment Court System in CETA enables Canada-based corporations to directly challenge EU and

GMO SALMON

In March 2016, Canadian authorities approved AquaAdvantage Salmon, the first genetically modified animal to be approved for human consumption in the country. Canada did not require labelling, instead giving the production firm AquaBounty Technologies the option of labelling the product voluntarily. About 4.5 tonnes of GM salmon fillets have already been sold in Canada – without labelling. This means that Canadians have been consuming GM salmon without their knowledge. CETA may boost salmon exports from Canada to the EU by lowering tariffs and expanding quotas. However, given the absence of labelling and traceability in Canada, and considering that GM salmon is not authorised in the EU, each import of Canadian salmon would need to be tested in order to avoid the import of any GM fish.

member state food safety laws and agricultural policies or regulations on the basis of alleged discrimination or loss of potential profits, and to receive compensation.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING UNDER THREAT BY CETA

Country of origin labelling laws, known as COOL, allow consumers to know where certain foods originated. As the EU is gearing towards increased meat imports from countries such as China, Thailand and Brazil, and as food scandals occur on a regular basis both in the EU and outside it, consumers have a real interest in knowing where their food comes from. Large agribusinesses would prefer consumers not to know that animals are often raised in one country, slaughtered in another, and processed in a third, after which different parts of the animal are transported to different countries.

The EU has COOL regulations for fresh cuts of meat, but not for processed meat or dairy. The European Parliament wants to expand the scope of labelling to include processed foods in the EU, while several member states are moving forward with expanding them in their own countries. Yet the North American meat industry managed to cancel COOL regulations similar to the EU's in the US through

the World Trade Organisation's dispute settlement process. Now, CETA offers them various avenues to weaken existing COOL regulations and to halt efforts to expand them through EU and member state law. Major meat processing corporations will be able to directly sue the EU and its member states for expanding COOL rules, if CETA enters into force with the proposed Investment Court System (Briefing Paper 2).

ANIMAL WELFARE AND CLONING CONCERNS

Animal cloning has been shown to increase the frequency of malformations and is therefore likely to increase animal suffering. Cloning of farm animals occurs in the US, but not in Europe or Canada. The lack of mandatory US labelling laws on cloned animals, combined with the frequent trading of live cattle, pigs, genetic material and other animal products between the US and Canada, make the presence of cloned animals in the Canadian meat and livestock supply chain highly likely. Currently, no reliable labelling and traceability systems exist for clone-derived products leaving the US or entering Canada and the EU. This is despite repeated calls by the European Parliament to stop offspring of cloned animals entering the EU. Not only will CETA increase the trade in meat between the EU and Canada (and therefore by extension US meat industry), but it is also likely to get in the way of developing stronger cloning regulations or labelling and traceability requirements, because they could be seen as 'trade restrictive' (Briefing Paper 3).

DO THE RIGHT THING

The future of food and agriculture is just one of many aspects of our daily lives that CETA will influence. Agribusiness corporations have lobbied hard in favour of CETA. However, it is up to the people to say 'yes' or 'no' to trade deals like CETA. This is the peoples' final chance to speak up. The ball is in the court of parliaments to choose to either ratify or reject CETA. The European Commission, Council and Parliament have all failed to acknowledge the integrated structure of meat and animal trade between the US and Canada, and have thus condoned the further opening of the European market for foods and other products derived through clone technology, GMOs, and with harmful additives such as growth hormones. Member state parliaments should not make the same mistake, and should reject CETA. Politicians represent the peoples' voice. Make sure you let them know that you reject CETA in favour of a more people, animal and planet friendly food and agriculture system!

Briefing by IATP Europe and Greenpeace Netherlands | September 2017

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