



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Deputy Director General, in charge of Directorates A, B and C

Brussels,
MRP/sn/agri.ddg1.b.4(2017)427392

Dear Sir/Madam,

In the last Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) meeting on 16 January, an AOB point was requested by Belgium on Organic Salmon from Norway/Iceland. In the discussions that followed, several Member States asked the Commission to clarify its position as regards the imports of organic salmon and other aquaculture products from Norway.

This letter intends to respond to Member States' request by confirming the position expressed in my letter of 24 October 2016 to the Committee on Organic Production (COP) delegates (Ares(2016)6068806). You will find it enclosed.

The situation created by the lack of implementation by Norway and Iceland of their obligations in the context of the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement concerning salmon and all aquaculture products certified as organic in these countries was explained in detail in that letter. As the transitional period for the certification of aquaculture products under national rules has by far expired and the Regulations setting out the EU rules for organic aquaculture production have not yet been incorporated into the EEA Agreement and thus are not applicable in Norway, the certification of Norwegian organic aquaculture products cannot be carried out in accordance with the relevant EU legislation.

Until the EU organic regulations have been incorporated into Annex II, Chapter XII, to the EEA Agreement and Norway and Iceland have implemented those Regulations into their national legislation pursuant to Article 7 EEA, Norwegian and Icelandic aquaculture products cannot be marketed in the EU as organic. Member States shall give instructions to the control authorities and control bodies to prevent the imports and marketing as organic of these products in their markets without delay.

I take the opportunity of this letter to inform you about the latest development in this issue. In the EEA Joint Subcommittee held on 26 January, the EFTA Secretariat informed about the decision of the new Icelandic government to withdraw its requests for exemptions from the EU Organic Regulations. This follows the similar announcement by the Norwegian government in October and paves the way to the incorporation of the EU Organic legislation into the EEA Agreement.

To the Chief Agricultural Attachés at Permanent Representations of all Member States

In the light of these news, the Commission services are looking forward to the incorporation of the EU organics legislation into the EEA Agreement. This is expected to be done via an EEA Joint Committee Decision to be adopted in the coming weeks. We will keep you informed.

In the meantime, the positions expressed above remain valid.

Yours sincerely,



p.o. Aldo LONGO in absence of
María Angeles BENITEZ SALAS

Enclosure: EU Letter of 24 October 2016 (Ares(2016)6068806)

Copy: SCA Spokespersons and COP Delegates