

**AUSTRALIA**

**Australian Dairy Farmers demand plant-based alternatives drop the 'milk' labelling**

Australian dairy farmers are urging the federal government to engage in a debate over milk labelling. They say products such as soy milk and almond milk should not be allowed to be called 'milk', because they do not contain any dairy products.

The Australian Dairy Farmers group has written to the Agriculture Minister Bridget McKenzie and the Chair of the Ministerial Food Forum Richard Colbeck requesting:

- ❖ A holistic review of labelling and marketing on non-dairy alternatives, including possible changes to the Food Standards Code.
- ❖ The development of additional regulations to prevent plant-based alternatives from 'evoking' the qualities and values of dairy.

"Australia needs to restore truth in product labelling so that consumers can make more accurate food and beverage choices," said Australian Dairy Farmers group President Terry Richardson in a statement.

"Over the past decade, a growing number of plant-based products have cropped up, using the name milk, co-opting the look and feel of dairy milk right down to the packaging, and trading on dairy's reputation to gain a marketing advantage.



"We have seen a growing number of plant-based products on supermarket shelves over the last decade, gaining a marketing advantage by using the name milk and co-opting the look and feel of dairy, while claiming to have nutritional equivalency with dairy milk."

**DENMARK**

**Denmark's Social Democrats want to stop supermarkets from wasting food**

Over 715,000 tonnes of food are wasted annually in Denmark, with nearly a quarter of that figure coming from retailers. That is too much, say the Social Democrats, who are prepared to legislate against wastage. The Social Democrats could pass laws restricting supermarkets from throwing out food should they win upcoming general election, media reports.

The party presented a new plan to reduce food waste. Should it be elected as leader of a new government in next general election, the Social Democrats will enter dialogue with the food retail sector to find a target for reduction of wastage, which the industry will then be required to comply with. If targets are not met, a Social Democrat-led government would seek to pass laws banning food waste, said Dan Jørgensen, the party's deputy leader in parliament. "In the first instance, we would hope that when we reach an agreement with the retail industry, they will reach that (target)," Jørgensen said. "But if there are no results, we are prepared to legislate," he added.

Potential laws in the area could require companies to use unsold food as biofuels, animal feed or for donation to charitable organisations, with the overall aim of preventing it from being thrown out, Jørgensen explained.

The party has so far resisted setting out any specific criteria or sanctions for companies that do not meet agreed targets. But a number of initiatives would be put into place to reduce food waste with the targets in mind, deputy leader Jørgensen said.

Current VAT rules can result in extra expenses for stores which donate or give away food, and could be subject to change as part of the Social Democrat initiative. But the industry has previously pointed out that EU rules make legislative changes in the area difficult. Charities which make use of surplus food could also be boosted by the party's plan, but



no specific spending has yet been set out. "It could well be that this area needs more resources, and we will look at that," Jørgensen said.

A number of Danish companies already have schemes in place to reduce food waste. These include Salling Group, which owns the Netto and Føtex chains amongst others in Denmark. The company aims to halve its food wastage by 2030.

Private households remain the biggest source of food waste in Denmark, with a 36 percent share – equivalent to 260,000 tonnes annually. Retail is the second largest contributor, at 23 percent or 163,000 tonnes.

### EGYPT

#### WFP expands food assistance in Egypt to include refugees from multiple countries

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Egypt expanded its existing food assistance to refugees in the country to include populations other than Syrian refugees.

It is the first time WFP includes other nationalities since the start of its refugee assistance programme in Egypt six years ago. This comes in line with "one refugee" policy, which vulnerable refugees of different nationalities residing in one country receive equal access to assistance based on their needs.

Thanks to a generous contribution from USAID's Office of Food For Peace, WFP can now reach an additional 24,000 registered refugees identified as 'most vulnerable'. The refugees receive a monthly food voucher which they can use to purchase healthy food items at 50 locally-contracted retailers and secure their families' basic food needs.

"Today, thanks to the contribution of USAID Food For Peace, we are starting a new chapter in our food assistance programme reaching out to more vulnerable refugees regardless of their nationality," said Menghestab Haile, WFP Representative and Country Director in Egypt. "We rely on the generosity of

donors to reach a target of 50,000 vulnerable refugees from different nationalities by the end of 2019."

Over half of the refugees residing in Egypt are from Syria, with the rest coming from Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan and Yemen. WFP has been assisting vulnerable Syrian refugees in Egypt since 2013, injecting some US\$148 million into the Egyptian economy through food vouchers and local food purchases.

Recent results from WFP's food security analysis show that WFP food assistance has lifted more than one third of targeted refugees above the national income poverty line and has significantly contributed to their food security status.

WFP's monitoring also shows that refugees receiving assistance rely on their food vouchers to buy essential food items like meat, eggs, dairy, oils and pulses. WFP has been in Egypt since 1968, working with the government to respond to humanitarian needs and tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition in the country.

### INDIA

#### India lowers duty on 400,000 tonnes of corn imports as prices jump

The additional 400,000 tonnes of imports were permitted at the same rate following a request from the poultry industry, the government said in a statement.

India lowered import taxes on an additional 400,000 tonnes of corn to 15%, the government said to offset a rise in the price of animal feed in the country following a drought last year.

India allowed imports of 100,000 tonnes of corn at the concessional tax rate in June.

India, the world's seventh-biggest corn producer, normally imposes a 60% import tax on the grain, but an infestation of the fall armyworm, which devastated African crops in 2017, and dry weather in some areas have cut the country's corn output.





Amit Saraogi, managing director of Anmol Feeds Pvt. Ltd., said the shortage of corn had been hurting the cattle feed industry since last year and the additional imports would help to bring down prices.

India was a major exporter of corn to Southeast Asia until falling output and increasing demand from poultry producers and corn starch manufacturers turned it into an importer a few years ago.

## KENYA

### Corruption is the biggest threat to Kenya's food security dream

It is shameful when a country, whose main economic activity is agriculture, cannot grow enough to feed its populace. But that, sadly, is the case in Kenya.

At the moment, the Strategic Food Reserve (SFR) reportedly holds only a million bags of maize, an amount barely enough to feed the nation for the next some weeks. Already, the Government has warned that more than two million Kenyans are at risk of starvation beginning this month. The number of people in need of food aid stood at 1.6 million in May.

Turkana, Marsabit, parts of Baringo, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River and Isiolo will be the hardest hit by the food shortage. The National Drought Management Authority's (NDMA) latest report blames the shortage on the drought that ravaged many parts of the country earlier this year.

Kenyans have started to feel the pinch with the price of a two-kilo maize flour packet now retailing at Sh124. Without doubt, if no action is taken, the country will soon be in the grip of a major food crisis and the usual script of hunger and anger will unfold. Piteable images of scrawny, screaming children clinging to their skinny, helpless parents will once again dominate our media spaces.

Granted, the Government has been doing its best to ameliorate the situation, with Devolution Cabinet Secretary Eugene Wamalwa shuttling from one famine-hit county to the other doling out rations and assurances that no Kenyan would die from hunger. But despite the assurances, a number of Kenyans were reported to have succumbed to hunger early in the year, but the Government was quick to deny this.

If current stocks at the SFR are anything to go by, it is crystal clear we will soon run out of maize—the country's staple food. It is therefore imperative that the Government looks outwards for a solution.

Perhaps due to the politics and corruption that surround importation of maize, the Cabinet is still undecided on whether to open the floodgates for duty-free maize, months after Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mwangi Kiunjuri warned that the stocks were inadequate.

But there is no need for further procrastination. Considering the state of the SFR, and the warning that the lives of two million Kenyans are at stake, the Government ought to move swiftly to ensure that no one dies due to lack of food.

There are reports that the Government had opened negotiations with Tanzania in June to import a million bags of maize. The process should be speeded so that the maize arrives before the problem reaches crisis levels. But even as the Government moves to save Kenyans from hunger pangs, it is imperative that it reassess its strategies to make sure that the country achieves its elusive dream of food security.

## MEXICO

### Mexican Craft Brewers Explore U.S. Barley

Mexican craft brewers learned about U.S. barley and malt production, gained confidence in the quality of U.S. malt and established business relationships with U.S. producers and suppliers.

A group of craft brewers from Mexico saw their prime ingredient -- barley -- in the field for the first time ever during a trade team recently organized by the U.S. Grains Council (USGC).

The team's visit to North Dakota and Montana connected the brewers with both U.S. farmers and U.S. malting houses to showcase the quality, economic and logistical advantages of using U.S. barley to brew their beer.

"None of these craft brewers had been in a barley field or seen barley in grain form, meaning learning about barley production, barley varieties and malt types from the source was very valuable," says Javier Chavez, USGC marketing specialist in Mexico, who accompanied the team.

While in the United States this month, the team participated in a barley and malt procurement short course at the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) and met directly with barley producers and malt suppliers.

"Our team was very impressed with all the visits, including the malting houses," Chavez says. "Being entrepreneurs, team members detected opportunities to buy directly from U.S. malt producers and saw the advantage of joining forces through a purchasing group to buy larger volumes of malt at a time."

Team members included second-gen-

eration craft brewers who had been brewing for at least five years and entrepreneurs running both craft breweries and other businesses. All of the members belong to Cerveceros de Mexico, the organization that represents both craft brewers and larger market players. USGC has worked with this organization to discuss how the association can make consolidated purchases from the United States, which would provide an economic advantage by forming buying groups.

USGC will continue to engage with the developing craft brew industry in the coming year, organizing additional education and procurement programs for barley promotion, further encouraging the development of a purchasing group for Mexican craft brewers and facilitating direct purchases between Mexican micro-breweries and specialized craft malters.

### **SOUTH KOREA**

#### **South Korea is sending \$8 Million in food aid to North Korea**

South Korea last week approved \$8 million in food aid to North Korea, in response to what U.N. agencies say are the worst harvests there in a decade and severe food shortages affecting 40% of the North's population.

Despite the South Korean government's insistence on separating the aid from politics, the donation is widely seen as having the political goal of improving inter-Korean relations. With nuclear

negotiations with the U.S. in limbo, South Korea is eager to nudge the North to return to the negotiating table — and humanitarian aid is one way to do that. Seoul was quick to point out that U.N. sanctions targeting the North's nuclear programs allow for humanitarian assistance and that the Trump administration is on board with it.

Even though North Korea requested the aid from international aid organizations and South Korean food will be distributed through those groups, Pyongyang was not impressed with the donation. It called the gesture — the first from Seoul since 2015 and the first under the administration of President Moon Jae-In — "non-essential" to ties between the two Koreas.

### **TURKEY**

#### **Turkish agency distributes food aid in Kenya**

Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency distributes food packages to people in need. Single mothers and the elderly in Kenya's Nakuru town benefitted from free Turkish food aid. The town is located on the floor of the Great Rift Valley 161 kilometers from the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) distributed food packages to hundreds in the form of Ramadan aid. The packages included rice, and Maize flour used to make Kenyan staple food called Ugali, beans and cooking oil among others.

TIKA has been assisting disadvantaged Kenyans during the holy month of Ramadan with food aid as different parts of Kenya are experiencing food shortages due to poor rainfall. TIKa plans to continue delivering food parcels to poor families across the coastal enclave throughout the fasting month of Ramadan.

### **USA**

#### **USDA Announces \$16B Support Package for Farmers**

Administration continues to work on free, fair, and reciprocal trade deals.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has announced further details of the \$16 billion package aimed at supporting American agricultural producers while the administration continues to work on free, fair, and reciprocal trade deals.

In May, President Trump directed Secretary Perdue to craft a relief strategy in line with the estimated impacts of unjustified retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agricultural goods and other trade disruptions. The Market Facilitation Program (MFP), Food Purchase and Distribution Program (FPDP), and Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP) will assist agricultural producers while President Trump works to address long-standing market access barriers.

"China and other nations have not played by the rules for a long time, and President Trump is the first President to stand up to them and send a clear message that the United States will no longer tolerate unfair trade practices," Secretary Perdue says. "The details we announced ensure farmers will not stand alone in facing unjustified retaliatory tariffs while President Trump continues working to solidify better and stronger trade deals around the globe.

"Our team at USDA reflected on what worked well and gathered feedback on last year's program to make this one even stronger and more effective for farmers. Our farmers work hard, are the most productive in the world, and we aim to match their enthusiasm and patriotism as we support them," Secretary Perdue adds. ♦

