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FINAL EU PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

Report Categories:

Trade Policy Monitoring

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Report Highlights:

The European Commission is soliciting stakeholder comments in a final public consultation on draft Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules for feed, food and drink products. After the public consultation closes, it will no longer be possible to submit further comments.

EC SOLICITS STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS IN FINAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT (PEF)

On July 29, 2016, the European Commission (EC) launched a public consultation on a series [of draft “Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules” \(PEFCRs\)](#) for feed, food and drink products. This final consultation is the last opportunity for stakeholders to submit comments on the draft final product and sector specific rules developed during a three-year (2013-2016) pilot program. The PEF pilot program aims at shaping harmonized methodologies for voluntary footprint measurement and communication of environmental performance.

PEFCRs opened for consultation and their respective due dates are:

- Beer: September 15, 2016
- Dairy: September 9, 2016
- Feed for food-producing animals: September 9, 2016
- Packed fresh meat from bovine, pigs and sheep: September 16, 2016
- Dry pasta: August 30, 2016
- Packed water: September 8, 2016
- Pet food (dogs and cats): September 5, 2016
- Olive oil: not yet available
- Wine: September 9, 2016

After the public consultation period closes, it will no longer be possible to submit further comments. In order to access the draft PEFCRs and templates for comments, interested groups need to register as a stakeholder. [Instructions for registration](#) are provided on DG Environment’s website. Each pilot project has a dedicated workspace where comments can be uploaded. Stakeholders experiencing registration problems can contact marcela.rondon@fas.usda.gov or hilde.brans@fas.usda.gov

Background

The European Union (EU) is half way through the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) pilot phase process of developing a harmonized methodology for calculation of the environmental footprint of different products with the goal of measuring environmental performance of products for potential policy making.

The PEF is a multi-criteria measurement for the environmental performance of any kind of product throughout its life cycle. In 2013, the European Commission (EC) launched a three-year testing period of the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and Organization Environmental Footprint (OEF) through an open call for volunteers.

PEFs and OEFs are Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) based methods to calculate the environmental performance of a product and organization. These methods, proposed by the EC as a harmonized way of measuring the environmental footprint, were tested by more than 280 volunteering companies representing diverse sectors and organizations. The aim of the PEF pilot phase is to understand the real potential of the methods before proposing new policies. PEFCRs include business-to-business and business-to-consumer tools to communicate the environmental performance of a product or organization.

Potential Trade Barrier?

While there is no legislative draft proposal being considered as the PEF pilot phase is still in progress, the EU has not decided whether communicating the environmental performance of a product should remain voluntary or become mandatory. Furthermore, they have indicated that originally, the focus of the PEF initiative was only in an environmental context, but is now being pushed into a broader policy context, i.e. [the Circular Economy](#).

For more information on the EU's Environment Footprint, please visit:

- European Commission – DG Environment:
- http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/ef_pilots.htm
- <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/>

FAS/USEU: <http://www.usda-eu.org/topics/footprinting/>