



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Commission to South Africa

Pretoria, 18-11-2008

Press Conference

Minister Lulama Xingwana (Agriculture) & Lauro Panella (European Commission)

address the media at:

Venue: Birchwood Hotel, Chestnut Room, Viewpoint St, Bartlett, Boksburg

Tel: +27(0)11-897-0000

Time: 19h00

Date: 24 November 2008

Press Release

.../for immediate release

BSE training in South Africa forms part of EU's Safer Food Initiative

The European Commission will provide a training workshop on EU legislation for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), as well as for meat related legislation, in Boksburg on 25-27 November. The workshop forms part of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers' **Better Training for Safer Food** initiative.

Some 60 participants from southern Africa and Indonesia are expected to attend - the group will be made up largely of national authority control staff dealing with animal health and food safety and also some participants from the private sector. Representatives of regional organisations, including the African Union and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, are also expected to attend.

The training is aimed at giving participants a clear and common understanding of EU BSE and meat legislation. Attendants should subsequently be better equipped to monitor and detect the disease and to carry out effective controls on the meat production process. This is essential in order to ensure that meat placed on the market does not present public health risks.

Meeting EU standards in these areas will also open access to the European market for African meat products, thus fostering economic development with a positive knock-on effect on poverty alleviation.

In line with the SA-EU Strategic Partnership (Nov 2006), in terms of which the parties agree to strengthen their cooperation in various areas, including sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures - as well as food safety - at bilateral, regional and global levels, this initiative is conducted to further strengthen relations with South Africa, and the region. In this regard, the EU has also in the past extended SPS laboratory training opportunities to food and health authorities across southern Africa.

Apart from the positive impact on human and animal health, this cooperation is expected to foster bilateral and regional trade flows. The EU is Africa's largest trading partner with South Africa remaining within the EU's top-20. Similarly, enhanced cooperation and capacity building in these areas of consumer protection are a relevant part of the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership notably in the context of EU-SADC cooperation.

Training will include plenary presentations and site visits. The workshop will begin with a general overview of EU food legislation, to be followed by presentations covering Food and Veterinary Office inspections and EU legislation applicable to official controls, the process for official recognition of BSE risk status, animal feeding, monitoring programmes, controls in primary production and processing establishments. Participants will be divided into groups and will participate in either site visits or working groups and discussion sessions. Site visits will take place at farms and slaughterhouses approved by the South African authorities and will focus on controls in primary production and hygiene in slaughterhouses. The main topics of the discussion sessions will be risk assessment, surveillance programmes, data sharing, crisis communication and contingency plans. Visits and discussions will be followed by debriefing sessions.

This workshop is part of a wider **Better Training for Safer Food** programme on EU food standards designed to benefit third countries. Workshops within this programme cover a range of other areas including EU standards for fruit, vegetables and fishery products, legislation on labelling and traceability, plant health and residue monitoring plans. The programme also comprises sustained training and technical assistance missions. Training within this programme is held in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Please confirm your attendance to Shireen Jacobs, by fax +27(0)21-434-7668 or by email pm.sar@foodinfo-europe.com.

For more information see: www.foodinfo-europe.com