

Summary: TTIP Testimony by Richard Wilkins, Treasurer, American Soybean Association

U.S. soybean exports to the European Union have fallen by 85 percent since 1998. This sharp decline is largely due to biotech traceability and labeling regulations in place since 1999. The EU's approval process for new biotech events is causing long delays that threaten trade disruptions. The EU must revise its labeling rules, and must also reform its approval process for new biotech events to ensure that adherence to reasonable timelines are enforced.

The EU's Renewable Energy Directive disqualifies U.S. biodiesel and biodiesel feedstocks based on inaccurate greenhouse gas emissions reduction standards and arbitrary sustainability requirements imposed on U.S. farmers and our marketing system. The EU must enter into bilateral negotiations with the U.S. on an agreement under which U.S. biodiesel and biodiesel feedstocks are accepted meet the requirements of the RED on an aggregate basis. Without such an agreement, the RED will result in the loss of remaining U.S. soy exports to the EU.

The EU's pesticide regulation adopted in 2009 could result in imposing a default level of virtually zero on deregistered products, which would risk losing access to the EU market for treated U.S. commodities. The EU must provide commitments on how pesticide import tolerances are set before authorizations begin to expire.

EU agriculture ministers have proposed providing subsidies for production of high-protein crops, particularly soybeans, in Ecologically-Focused Areas. This proposal would contravene EU WTO commitments under the WTO and violate the Blair House Agreement. TTIP must ensure this proposal is not promulgated into law.

The U.S. livestock industry is the largest market for U.S. soybean producers. In addition to restricting market access through tariffs and tariff rate quotas, the EU uses numerous sanitary measures that greatly limit or prevent imports of U.S. livestock products. These measures must be addressed under the TTIP to increase U.S. access to the EU market.