



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Press Release(17)46
(English only)**

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Various sugar related articles

The Executive Director would like to draw your attention to the relevant articles below all of which are important to the sugar sector and would encourage you to disseminate the information to colleagues in the industry.

PureCircle makes 'breakthrough' in sequencing genome of stevia FoodBev.com October 20, 2017

Scientists from sweetener company PureCircle have managed to map the genetic make-up of the stevia plant for the first time, providing a better understanding of how stevia derives its characteristic sweetness.

The findings – from researchers associated with the PureCircle Stevia Institute and crop researchers KeyGene – provides a better understanding of key enzyme groups used by the stevia plant to produce the steviol glycosides that contribute to the sweetness of the stevia leaf.

The research identified several million potentially new genetic markets, which could help accelerate traditional production of the stevia plant. It may allow PureCircle to optimise levels of the best-tasting steviol glycosides, including improvements in the level of well-known minor glycosides such as Reb D and Reb M.

PureCircle's Avetik Markosyan, who is head of group research and development for the company, said: "PureCircle is committed to strengthening the understanding of the stevia leaf. These findings provide strategic enhancements to our breeding and agronomy programmes, as well as tremendous utility for scientists, farmers and developers working with stevia as a non-GMO ingredient."

Arjen van Tunen, CEO of crop research company KeyGene, added: "Having a single high-quality reference genome is generally considered a major step forward for newly domesticated crops, such as stevia. We have surpassed this benchmark with three independent reference genomes for stevia. This comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the stevia genome will directly translate to high-value, improved stevia varieties."

The new data have been integrated into CropPedia, a comprehensive bioinformatics platform developed by KeyGene to allow datasets relating to the genome, transcriptome and metabolome of stevia to be visualised and analysed.

PureCircle predicts the breakthrough will allow it to create improved stevia varieties using traditional breeding practices.

EU, Mercosur press for year-end trade deal despite resistance
FoodNavigator.com 26-Oct-2017 By Katy Askew

A trade deal between the European Union and the Latin American countries represented by Mercosur are could be concluded by the end of the year, despite resistance from European agricultural interests.

<https://www.foodnavigator.com/article/2017/10/26/eu-mercotur-press-for-year-end-trade-deal-despite-resistance>

Formulating with dairy: More protein, less sugar, a cleaner label
FoodNavigator.com 26-Oct-2017 By Elaine Watson

Less sugar, more protein, a cleaner label, savory flavors, and new formats from farmer's cheese bars to ambient moon cheese... What's keeping dairy formulators busy these days? FoodNavigator-USA caught up with Stephen Cobbe, R&D director, dairy, at Kerry to find out...

<https://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/article/2017/10/27/60-second-interview-stephen-cobbe-r-d-director-dairy-kerry>

Sugaronline Ebriefing - 26/10/2017
Baltic states fighting head first in war against sugar

The Baltic States are waging a war against unhealthy eating and drinking habits, and the Estonian government has been active on a number of fronts. First it raised excise duty on alcohol, and then quickly pushed forward legislation aiming to reduce sugar in food and beverages, duly passed by the Estonian parliament, the Riigikogu, in June 2017. The law introduced taxes on all sweetened drinks containing more than 5 grams of sugar per 100 millilitres, according to Emerging Europe.

The law, however, did not meet the approval of the country's president Kersti Kaljulaid, who refused to promulgate it on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.

The head of state deemed that some provisions of the law ran counter to the principle of equality and lacked legal clarity. Specifically, Kaljulaid disapproved of tax exemptions for Estonia's main ferry company, Tallink.

The president's move was hailed by opponents of the bill who argued that the only purpose of the tax is to fill gaps in the government's budget.

Nevertheless, the Estonian Ministry of Finance declared this month that the law, officially known as the Sugary Drink Tax Act, is compliant with the Estonian Constitution.

The ministry says that granting a tax exemption to sweetened beverages sold on board a ferry or aircraft making an international voyage does not violate the principle of equal treatment embedded in the constitution.

It argued that points of sale on a ferry (most of which serve nearby Helsinki) are primarily for leisure entertainment, not for satisfying day-to-day consumption needs, whereas a land-based point of sale is linked to a specific geographic location.

With both sides trading barbs, Estonia's Supreme Court, which is also the country's court of constitutional review, is expected to weigh in on the issue.

Meanwhile, Latvia's Ministry of Health has submitted proposals to the Ministry of Finance to increase an existing tax on non-alcoholic beverages in an attempt to reduce sugar consumption in the country. It also wants to apply an excise tax on food products high in salt, sugar and fats.

"Unfortunately, the proposals were not supported by our parliament, the Saeima," Oskars Sneiders, a communications specialist at the Health Ministry, told Emerging Europe.

Lithuania, the third Baltic State, is also mulling a sugar tax, but the country's Health Minister, Aurelijus Veryga, doubts whether a legislative motion would clear the scrutiny of parliament, the Seimas.

"I don't see such a draft on the parliamentary floor," Veryga told Emerging Europe. "There are other means to tackle sugar consumption...We're currently in talks with local food and beverage producers, trying to talk them into cutting sugar in their products. If we do not hammer out a deal that the ministry approves of, then we will consider tax measures."
