

Maize, starch & ethanol warning on US talks

European maize, ethanol & starch producers have joined forces in a joint warning ahead of the 11th round of EU-US free trade talks in Miami (19-23), saying greater access for US maize products would badly hit domestic producers, who are at a competitive disadvantage.

Representatives of EU maize, starch & ethanol industries* said their US counterparts were at a significant competitive advantage due to greater market support enabling lower feedstock prices, cheaper energy & a more reliable regulatory framework for producers. "Making the European market vulnerable to the world's largest ethanol producer & exporter would be detrimental to domestic [ethanol] producers", ePure Secretary General Robert Wright said.

"Tariffs are a legitimate & efficient measure to maintain a level playing field as any liberalisation would expose the EU to unfair competition, putting at risk over 150 000 jobs in the EU", Starch Europe Managing Director Jamie Fortescue said. Meanwhile, Copa-Cogeca's Pekka Pesonen said "farmers cannot do without ethanol & starch production in the EU, which also helps reduce our acute protein deficit, by co-producing animal feed which otherwise would have to be imported". The EU already introduced anti-dumping duties on US ethanol exports in Feb 2013, claiming the US was using unfair tax credits & subsidies.

**Copa-Cogeca (EU farm lobby), CEPM (maize growers), ePure (ethanol) & Starch Europe (starch)*