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Sweden bans use of Bisphenol A

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Agriculture in the News

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and
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Report Highlights:

In December 2012, Sweden passed a ban on the use of Bisphenol-A, or BPA in varnishes and coatings used in the packaging of food to children less than three years old. The ban will go into force on July 1st of this year. Since it concerns food for children younger than three years, the ban targets in practice baby food in glass jars. This market seems to be dominated by Swedish producers. U.S. exports of baby food to Sweden are negligible.

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BPA is a compound that is used to make polycarbonate polymers and epoxy resins, along with other materials used to make plastics. For many decades, it has been widely used, especially in food packaging. It notably strengthens polycarbonate plastics which otherwise would be more prone to cracks when impacted. Used in resins as a liner, it protects metal food containers from corrosion from aqueous and/or acid content, notably in canned food and canned drinks. It is also widely used to protect metal lids on glass jars (including baby food).

The ban in Sweden is less extensive than the ban in Belgium and France as it applies only to varnishes and coatings, the so-called last layer connected to the food. According to the Swedish, Annex 1, p.15 varnishes and coatings of the [EU Regulation 1935/2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food](#) provides the possibility to install such ban.

The Swedish food industry and retailers have not reacted against the ban. Since it concerns food for children younger than three years, the ban targets in practice baby food in glass jars. This market seems to be dominated by Swedish producers. U.S. exports of baby food to Sweden are negligible. Swedish based baby food producers like Semper and Nestlé already stopped using BPA since 2010. They even market their baby food products as being BPA-free.

Guidance on the exact definitions and implementation of the ban will be done by the Swedish National Food Agency, www.slv.se. The Ministry indicated that it will not to expand the ban to more food products at this point as they want to wait for the outcome of the EFSA assessment of the safety of BPA in food packaging.

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