

Maize and starch sector fear unfair TTIP deal

EU maize growers and Starch Europe warned this week about the threat to the EU economy from increased imports of US maize and maize products which could result from the TTIP negotiations.

As the 11th round of EU-US trade talks kicked off, they said the US provided much stronger market support to its starch and ethanol industry than the EU.

They said energy costs in the US were much lower than here and argued that "the US has a much more supportive and reliable regulatory and policy framework for farmers, starch and ethanol producers".

They said they supported a transatlantic trade deal if conditions were met but warned that European farmers could not do without EU-based ethanol and starch production.

This helped to reduce the EU's protein deficit, by co-producing animal feed which otherwise would have to be imported.

Jamie Fortescue, managing director of Starch Europe, said that a US starch plant produced about ten times more starch than the average EU equivalent.

Tariffs were a legitimate and efficient way to maintain a level playing field, he argued. Any liberalisation would expose the EU to unfair competition.