NMPF board okays dairy policy reforms

By IAN ELLIOTT

WORLD Bank said June 8 it expects food prices this year and next to hold steady around much the same level as last year, continuing volatility in global financial markets.

“Overall agricultural markets, especially grains, appear to avoid supply shocks and — barring unforeseen (weather-related) production problems such as those affecting some tropical commodities — are likely to remain ample over the forecast period.” World Bank economists said in their new “Global Economic Prospects 2010” report, which covers the 2010-12 period.

World Bank distributed global gross domestic product to expand between 2.5% and 3.3% this year and next. In 2012, growth will be between 3.2% and 3.5%.

The bank worried, however, that government borrowing problems and the fragility of the European banking sector could stall this recovery. The report indicates that Greece, Spain, the U.S., Britain, Ireland, Portugal, France and Italy will have worrisome sovereign debt problems.

Over the 2010-12 period, growth is likely to remain much stronger in developing countries than in high-income countries in North America, Europe and Asia. About half of the growth today is coming from developing countries.

Justin Yu Lin, World Bank chief economist, said “for a number of emerging countries the experience of growth in developing countries.” This lends support to the push by the U.S., Europe and other governments for greater openness in emerging developing countries like South Africa, China, India and Brazil for imports. Global trade is projected to climb 21% this year before eaning to an 8% growth rate in 2011-12, World Bank said.

Much of the concern over food security that surfaced during the run-up in agricultural prices in 2008 has subsided. “Most countries have reduced or eliminated trade restrictions introduced during the 2008 price spike,” the bank’s economists said.

According to the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture update, the global stocks-to-use ratio (including China) for key agricultural crops stands at 22%, the highest ratio in the past seven years and close to the historical average of 24%,” they said.

With these conditions, World Bank said food prices in general should remain “essentially unchanged” this year before dropping 3% next year (Figure). However, this is not the case in all regions of the world. “Rising and volatile domestic staple food prices are an increasing concern in several of the poorer countries in South Asia and in some South Asian countries as well,” World Bank said.


Food safety system

From page 1

TO address the long-term challenge of implementing such a comprehensive risk-based system, the report suggests that “the federal government move toward the establishment of a single food safety agency to unify the efforts of all agencies and departments with major responsibility for the safety of the U.S. food supply.”

Meanwhile, the report recommends that the government establish a centralized food safety data center outside of the regulatory agencies to collect information and conduct rapid, sophisticated assessments of food safety risks and appropriate policy interventions, according to an IOM statement.

DeLauro’s announcement on reopening the single food safety legislation followed her May 22 plea — in the midst of an alfalfa sprout recall — for the Senate to move on its comprehensive food safety bill: “I urge the Senate to act quickly before more people become victims of contaminated food and our faulty food safety system. The longer the food safety bill is delayed, the more vulnerable our food safety system remains,” she said.

The IOM report is online at www.nationalacademies.org.

From page 1

“Illegal gambling is a social epidemic that grows fiscally responsible, politically realistic.”

NMPF’s statement noted that Foundation for the Future of Agriculture and Food Safety is growing, and we have a unique opportunity to use this experience to serve global markets.

More information about NMPF’s statement is at www.nationalacademies.org.

Food prices to hold steady