



EU

Farmers & Agri-Cooperatives

Interviews

with
**Copa & Cogeca Presidents,
MEPs, Aivars Lapīņš,
Phil Hogan...**

copa***cogeca**

european farmers

european agri-cooperatives

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CAP



Unacceptable if farmers payments cut for errors under new CAP when greening rules still unclear: time to adapt vital, Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen warns.

In 2015, we will be pressing hard in to ensure that EU farmers and cooperatives are given time to adapt and payments are not cut unfairly in the first years of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform, Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said.

“Not only are the greening measures under the new CAP proving burdensome for farmers, but basic questions on how to implement the new rules still remain unanswered by the European Commission and the national administrations. It

is unacceptable that farmers’ payments will be cut when rules remain

It is unacceptable that farmers’ payments will be cut when rules remain unclear and national decisions are only just being finalised

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Farmers had to make their production decisions prepare the soil and plant seeds for the next season already last autumn. We have many reasons to believe that, as farmers start to apply unclear and incomplete rules, the risk of unintentional errors will be high, which would automatically cause payments to be cut. This is all the more important as the rules, even before the application of administrative penalties from 2017, will result in disproportionately large reductions, even for minor infringements. Since it is already too late to provide greater clarity on the rules, there must consequently be a certain amount of tolerance in the first years *vis à vis* cuts in greening payments. In addition, on-farm visits to

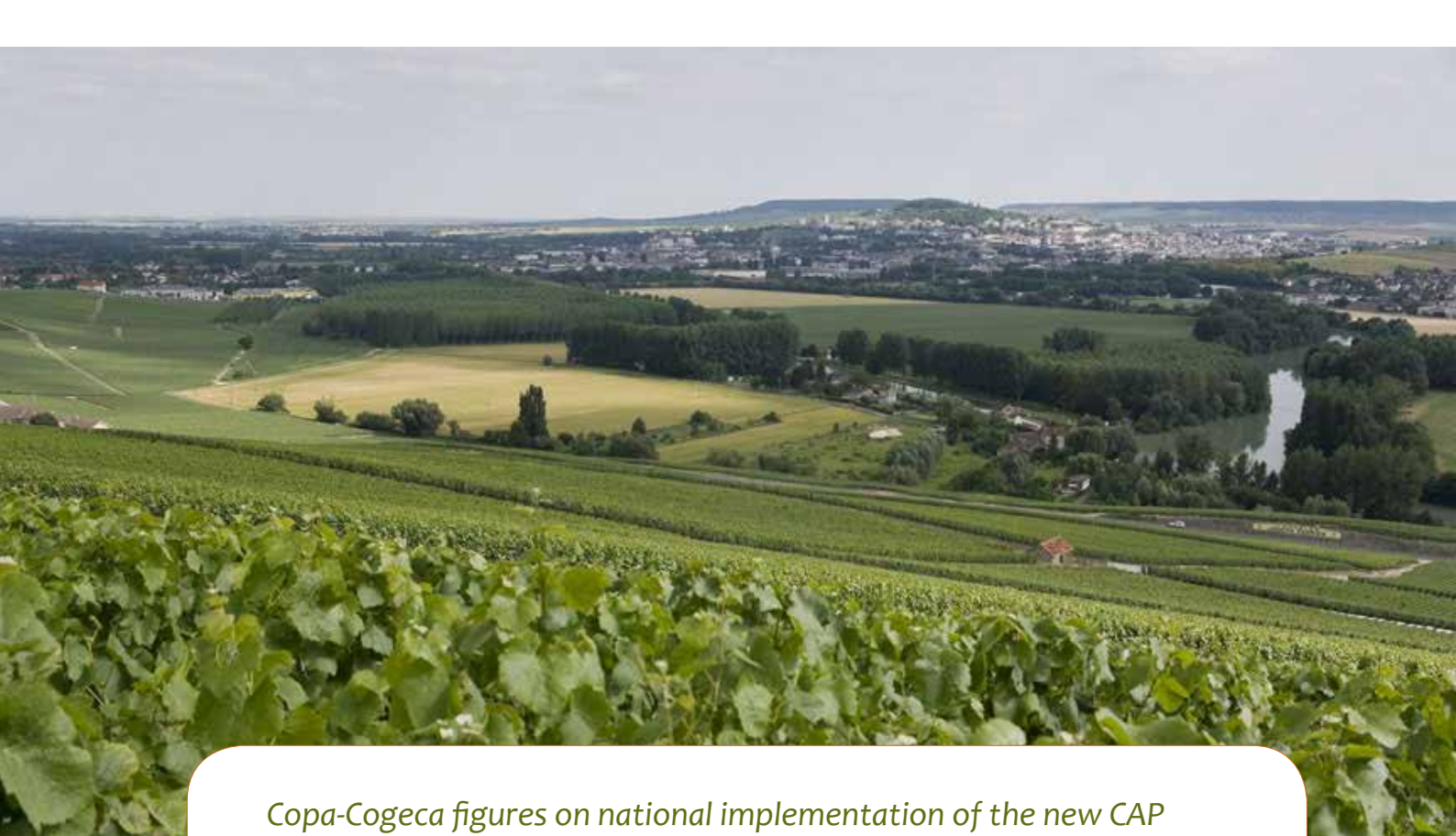
advise and help farmers to implement the greening rules correctly and deliver the desired environmental benefits are crucial”, he said.

Excessive red tape and bureaucracy under the CAP has already been identified as a major concern for farmers and cooperatives, stifling innovation and investments. “I welcome the fact that Commissioner Hogan has already launched a comprehensive screening exercise of the entire agricultural legislation. Making the legislation more comprehensible for those who have to implement it can prevent frustration and improve compliance with the rules. Besides, red tape can take away time from the core activity of farmers and influence their business

decisions. A reduction in red tape would free up time and resources to boost investment, growth and jobs. A key priority for Copa-Cogeca will be to feed into this exercise and ensure simplification is a success. But simplification should not change the

political compromise nor endanger the objectives of the CAP and it should take into account the diversity of the European agriculture”, he said.

“It will also be crucial for us to ensure that the greening measures do not result in land being taken out of production. It is very hard for farmers to understand that the EU should opt to cut production at a time when the rest of the world is focusing on producing more food to meet growing demand”, he insisted. We also be fighting hard to ensure red tape is minimised as far as possible via the CAP implementation rules.



Copa-Cogeca figures on national implementation of the new CAP rules

Latest Copa-Cogeca figures on the rate of transfer between the two pillars of the CAP show that 10 countries foresee to transfer funds from Direct Payments (1st pillar) to Rural Development (2nd pillar) for the period 2014-2020 whilst 5 countries will instead transfer funds from Rural Development to Direct Payments. Thus, almost EUR 6.5 billion (2% of national ceilings) will be transferred over 2015-2020 from Direct Payments to Rural Development and EUR 3.4 billion (4% of Pillar 2) in the opposite direction, with a net tendency towards Pillar 2.

On reduction of direct payments, Flanders, Ireland, Greece, Austria, Poland and Northern Ireland will impose a cap on payments above EUR 150 000 whilst countries such as Bulgaria, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Wales and Scotland will apply both degressivity and capping. Wallonia, Germany, France, Croatia, Lithuania and Romania will apply a payment for the first hectares instead. We estimate that the reduction of direct payments will generate up to EUR 177 million per year in the EU, to be diverted from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2, while the amount coming from voluntary top-up payment for the first hectares of the farm is estimated at EUR 1.6 billion per year once the payment scheme applies in full.

On voluntary coupled support, all Member States will use this measure except for Germany who will not have any coupling. Provisional information shows a large interest in the protein crop payment and in the livestock sector. In total, the amount devoted to specific sectors across the EU in 2015 will amount to EUR 4 billion.

On greening, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland and Poland have identified measures deemed to be equivalent whilst other countries willing to include them have withdrawn their application. Amongst other reasons, this is due to the fact that rural development programmes are still under discussion with the European Commission. Four countries will use all the Ecological Focus Areas (e.g. landscape elements, short rotation coppice, etc.) set out in the EU regulation whilst other Member States will limit the number of activated EFAs, which will restrict the options for farmers.

Copa President Albert Jan Maat outlines 2015 priorities: key word is export, export, export



The key word for the EU agriculture sector in 2015 is export, export, export, Copa President Albert Jan Maat underlined in an interview.

“In the long term, prospects are positive for the EU agriculture sector but 2015 will be a difficult year”, he warned.

Many farmers and agri-cooperatives have been badly hit by the impact of the Russian ban on farm exports, losing one of their key export markets. It's important to have support to find new market outlets, like in China and South America, to prevent the markets from collapsing, he said. “One possibility would be to let exports re-start gradually to Russia, on a case by case basis. This would help take excess supplies off the market, and have a positive impact on the overall market situation”, he insisted.

He also underlined the need to cut red tape and remove other unnecessary obstacles to trade which stop our exports entering non-EU country markets. “I put a strong call to European Farm Commissioner Hogan to overcome bureaucratic rules for export markets”, he said. For example, it is impossible to market European products using Grade A milk in the U.S and some cheeses made from raw milk mainly due to the testing methods which are not the same on both sides of the Atlantic. “It will also be important for us in the trade talks between the EU and U.S. to ensure that we maintain our high production standards, like the EU ban on hormone treated meat. I want the Americans to accept the EU




system of geographical indications (GIs) which protects European quality produce from imitations. I also urge MEPs to open the debate on genetically modified crops. We need a proper debate on it, based on science and not on emotions”, he added.

He continued “I also put a strong call to Commissioner Hogan and the European Parliament to learn from the U.S. and their Farm Bill. We need to use the next review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to make the sector more dynamic. There are some elements in the Farm Bill which could help us, like having more measures to help farmers better manage risk and the market by applying for instance insurance mechanisms and further prevention of animal diseases. The North-American Conference we are organizing in Belfast in October will give us a chance to get a better understanding of worldwide issues and have a debate on them”.

Wrapping up, Mr Maat drew attention to the lack of young farmers joining the industry and from taking over their farms. It's important to look at their position and make issues like access to credit easier to ensure we have a dynamic sector in the future. Everyone has to realise how important food is and that having enough food is the most important human right. The sector and consumers of food should not be the victim of political conflicts”, he concluded.

“ In the long term, prospects are positive for the EU agriculture sector but 2015 will be a difficult year



Copa and Cogeca warn against making cuts in targets to promote the use of conventional biofuels in future EU biofuel policy.

Copa-Cogeca is pressing to boost the use of conventional biofuels in transport. They cut transport emissions substantially and break EU dependence on oil at the same time as ensuring good feed supplies for animals

Now is not the time to jeopardise this.

We believe that current EU biofuels policy supports food security as only a fraction of rapeseed or wheat is used to produce biodiesel or bioethanol. The rest is a protein-rich by-product used for animal feed, which therefore allows the EU to decrease its dependency on soya imports. The EU does indeed have a plant protein deficit and imports 70% of its needs from the United States and South America.

We oppose the European Environment Committees proposal to introduce a 6% cap for first generation biofuels. We support having at least 8% of transport fuels made from crop-based fuels. A 6% cap for first generation biofuels would lead to a big reduction in EU rapeseed surface area and put at risk feed supplies, cause disturbances on the cereals and sugar markets, as well as a reduction in possible crop diversification through rotation. Capping first generation biofuels would prevent the EU plant protein deficit from being rebalanced. Only recently, EU leaders stated land should not be taken out of production. The risk that arable land will be abandoned is real.. Capping could also undermine investments in second-generation biofuels, which continue on from first generation biofuels and in the bioeconomy in general.

Only recently, FAO Director-General Jose Graziano da Silva said “We need to move on from the food versus fuel debate. Evidence shows that when developed responsibly, sustainable biofuel production systems can offer an additional source of income for poor farmers”. And this is crucial if farmers are to feed a growing world population estimated to rise by 60% by 2050.

In addition, Copa and Cogeca oppose including Indirect Land Use Changes (ILUC) in the legislative provisions as the models used as a basis to introduce iLUC factors in the fuel suppliers reporting to Member states were unacceptable and not backed up by science. They also were not agreed at international level. It is not suitable for precisely estimating the extent of land use change in non-EU countries and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions, due to critical data errors and important methodical problems.

Copa and Cogeca maintain that current policy remains realistic, due to productivity gains and increases in agricultural yields, as long as conventional biofuels are produced in a way that does not prejudice food production. Today's conventional biofuels ensure that food and fuel are complementary. The EU biofuels industry is also a key driver for growth and jobs in EU rural areas.

A stable and targeted decarbonisation policy to support biofuels, including certified sustainable biofuels made from arable crops, is vital post-2020

The Committee also voted to give Nils Torvalds, the MEP leading the process, a mandate to begin negotiations with member states straightaway. Copa and Cogeca urge EU Ministers, the Commission, MEPs to make sure our views are included in the final agreement to ensure we have a viable industry in the future.



The EU's policy of mass food production and low prices does not work: retailers and consumers must pay the price, Cogeca President Mr Pèes warns

The EU's policy of mass food production and low prices, with retailers driving down prices below production costs yet calling for high quality standards, does not work, Cogeca President Christian Pèes warned in an interview.

"It's a vicious circle. Retailers and consumers must pay the price for the food quality standards that they are calling for", he insisted. They are demanding high animal welfare and environmental standards to be respected when food is produced, which causes a big cost increase, yet they also want low prices. Supermarkets are continuing to slash prices which also

encourages fraud in the food chain, creating uncertainty amongst consumers, he said. "I also cannot accept that we have these high standards in the EU and imports to the EU do not have to respect them", he added.

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With input costs like fertilizer prices soaring, the price paid to farmers for their produce is often less than the cost of production. "Agri-cooperatives can help farmers to join forces and to get a better return for their produce but companies cannot continue to make losses. We are prepared to respond to market signals and respect consumer demands, but it comes at a price. The situation has to change. We have to get out of this situation of low prices and mass production", Mr Pèes stressed.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) also does not take into account this evolution. Costs of the greening measures

under the new CAP, like forcing farmers to grow a minimum of 3 crops even if the market points differently and taking land out of production via the Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs), often outweighs the compensation. The new CAP does not address the increasing volatility of agriculture markets or sufficiently support farmers' incomes, he said. It has to adapt. Confronted with many challenges like variable weather conditions and price volatility, there should be more measures to help farmers better manage risks, such as insurance. The EU could also move more towards a type of deficiency payment system which would help farmers save in good years and compensate them in bad ones, he added. Imports to the EU must also respect the same standards to ensure a more balanced and fair food chain, he insisted.

With input costs like fertilizer prices soaring, the price paid to farmers for their produce is often less than the cost of production

In addition, research and development must be stepped up to develop crops with for example better yields and better resistance to drought. Big seed companies are currently working on developing hybrid wheat varieties which would



increase the yield significantly, he pointed out. We also need to become less dependent on fertilizers. Infrastructures must be improved. A new research project by Rabobank and Copa-Cogeca for example shows more investment is needed to improve infrastructures and storage capacity in the EU grain and oilseeds sector. This would maximize trade and ensure that EU livestock producers have better access to feed. Huge investment opportunities exist here and projects must be included in the 315 billion euro Juncker investment plan. There is a huge potential to boost growth and jobs upstream and downstream. The EU agriculture and agri-food sector should be a key element in the plan as it

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plays a strong role in strengthening the economy especially in EU rural areas. Yet out of over 2000 applications already waiting, very few or none relate to agriculture. This must be revised, he concluded.



- ↑ **Organic farming & local produce**
European Consumers paying more attention to how their food is made and where it comes from
- ↑ **CAP simplification**
EU Commissioner Hogan has launched a CAP simplification exercise to prevent farmers and co-ops being strangled by red tape and complicated greening rules under new CAP
- ↑ **Fair food chain**
EU Commissioner Hogan has committed himself to analyse why farmers profit margins down: not acceptable squeezed by a handful of retailers



- ↓ **2014 EU Agriculture Prices and Incomes**
EU farmers incomes down due to low prices and impact Russian ban on EU agricultural exports: action vital
- ↓ **Mass food production at low cost**
EU consumers paying more attention to diet and how their food is produced: quality going up
- ↓ **Abusive practices in food chain**
EU Commissioner Hogan warns unacceptable farmers margins squeezed by a few retailers





Aivars Lapiņš tells Copa-Cogeca key Latvian Presidency priorities are EU Plans on Organic Production and Labelling and CAP Simplification in 2015



Making the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) simpler, especially the complicated greening rules, and making headway on EU organic production and labelling plans are key priorities for the Latvian Presidency, Secretary of State for Agriculture in Latvia Aivars Lapiņš told Copa-Cogeca in an interview.



The launch of a process of simplification on CAP reform has already been announced by European Farm Commissioner Phil Hogan. And this will be up for debate at EU Farm Ministers meeting on March 16, in a bid to get Ministers to agree conclusions on this in May, Aivars Lapiņš said. This is good news with farmers and cooperatives increasingly worried about the overly bureaucratic legislation.

Six countries – Germany, UK, Denmark, Sweden, Czech Republic, Estonia - have already indicated in a letter sent to Commissioner Hogan that they want a fundamental revision of the greening measures which for example force farmers to grow a minimum of 3 crops even if the market points differently. There will also now be an evaluation of the school fruit and milk schemes as part of the CAP simplification process.

With the EU organic sector being one of the fastest growing agriculture sectors, the Latvian Presidency will also make headway on compromise plans designed to strengthen EU organic production and labelling rules and agree a general approach at Ministers meeting in May, Aivars Lapiņš explained. Having workable rules to respond to demand and to support the growth of the organic market is vital. The theme of Ministers informal meeting on June 2 could also focus on organic farming.

In addition, Latvia wants to make progress on Commission proposals on animal health and official controls, plant health, the review of veterinary medicine rules, forestry, Aivars Lapiņš said. On forestry, they aim to prepare and agree conclusions highlighting the huge importance and multifunctional role of forests in terms of their economic and environment value at a UN international forum in New York on May 4-15. Forests are not just a place for walks, they are the lungs of Europe, he stressed. A task force has been set up on this.

With many EU farmers and cooperatives hit by the Russian ban on EU farm exports worth over 11 billion euros, the Presidency will also hold debates on its impact seeing where the worst affected areas are and decide solutions. They will continue monitoring the situation, looking especially at progress made by the Commission on export promotion and finding new market outlets, he said. Two events focusing on rural advisory services will also be held.

An overall objective of the Presidency is to improve the competitiveness of the European Union by promoting activities that generate growth, investment and jobs.



Promoting trade and further developing the World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks as well as the bilateral free trade negotiations like between the EU and US are also on the agenda of the Latvian presidency. “We support the fast-tracking of the commission-led negotiations on the transatlantic trade and investment partnership with the US as this agreement will strengthen our business ties. The EU-Japan trade agreement should be advanced too”, Edgars Rinkēvičs Latvia’s foreign affairs Minister said. The Presidency

also aims to promote a healthy lifestyle. Its main focus will be on nutrition policy, more specifically

on the ‘taste of childhood’, the eating habits of children and young people. They started a discussion during the high level conference in February in Riga, on the topic, ‘healthy lifestyle: nutrition and physical activities for children and young people in schools’. Copa-Cogeca is also working on this and will hold a workshop on ways to tackle obesity and promote healthy eating. The Presidency also aims to progress towards adopting a global legally-binding climate agreement in Paris at the end of 2015.

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Cogeca releases new 2014 report listing top 100 agri-cooperatives in the EU, showing 14% increase in turnover

A new report released by Cogeca reveals how the top 100 agri-cooperatives in the EU increased their turnover by 14% in 2013, compared to 2012, enhancing growth and jobs in the EU and helping farmers to have a viable future

The 400 page report “Development of agricultural cooperatives in the EU 2014” presents up to date information and trends by country and by sector on the leading agri-cooperatives in the EU. Θ

The report is based on information provided by Cogeca Member organisations as well as by the European Commission and EU statistical office EUROSTAT.

Cogeca President Christian Pees said “Findings from the report show the huge economic importance of EU agri-cooperatives for the economy. They enable farmers to join forces to market their produce and get a better price for it, so that they can have a more viable future. Up against increasingly competitive markets, it will become crucial for farmers to join cooperatives and attain a higher economic performance”.

He continued “This report shows that the best economic performance in farming is found in the Member States and sectors which have a higher share of cooperatives. Good economic performance is achieved by cooperatives which pursue innovative entrepreneurial business strategies and add value to their produce through processing and marketing. The figures reaffirm that EU cooperatives maintain a strong and dynamic market presence in the European food supply chain, with total turnover of some 22 000 cooperatives reaching as much as €347 billion euros”.

Wrapping up, he said “It is vital for the EU institutions to realise that cooperatives play a fundamental role in European agriculture and must be encouraged. The right policies must be put in place to ensure this”.

See Copa-Cogeca website for full report.



Evolution of TOP 25 EU Agri-cooperatives 2011 -2013 (by turnover in million €)

Evolution of TOP 25 EU Agri-cooperatives 2011 -2013 (by turnover in million €)				2011	2012	2013
1	Bay Wa	DE	Farm supply	9 586	10 531	15,957
2	FrieslandCampina	NL	Dairy	9 626	10 309	11 400
3	Arla Foods	DK	Dairy	7 384	8 450	9 887
4	DLG	DK	Farm supply	5 494	6 510	7 939
5	Danish Crown	DK	Meat	6 954	6 940	7 844
6	Agravis	DE	Farm supply	6 468	7 108	7 504
7	Vion Food	NL	Meat	8 870	9 490	7 000
8	InVivo	FR	Farm supply	6 083	5 669	6 138
9	Kerry Group	IE	Dairy	4 700	5 848	5 836
10	DMK	DE	Dairy	4 575	4 438	5 310
11	Metsä Goup	FI	Forestry	5 346	5 001	4 932
12	Tereos	FR	Arable (Sugar)	4 409	5 037	4 697
13	Terrena	FR	Multi-purpose	3 871	4 478	4 667
14	Sodiaal	FR	Dairy	4 021	4 421	4 616
15	FloraHolland	NL	Horticulture	4 130	4 281	4 350
16	VIVESCIA	FR	Cereals/Supply	3 483	3 983	4 209
17	Agrial	FR	Multi-purpose	2 261	2 715	3 901
18	Lantmännen	SE	Multi-purpose	4 244	4 302	3 750
19	Axéreal	FR	Farm supply	3 375	3 400	3 707
20	Danish Agro	DK	Farm supply	2 130	2 263	3 400
21	Glanbia	IE	Dairy	2 735	3 038	3 282
22	Agricola tre valli	IT	Meat	3 056		3 135
23	Agrana	AT	Sugar, Starch, Fruit	2 576	3 065	3 042
24	RWZ Rhein Main, Köln	DE	Farm supply	1 910	2 298	2 683
25	RWA	AT	Farm supply	2 513	2 696	2 657
TOTAL				119 800	126 271	141 843

Big drop in EU rapeseed production in 2015 forecast



Highlighting the serious impact of the neonicotinoid seed treatment ban on EU rapeseed production, Chairman of Copa-Cogeca Oilseeds and Protein Crop Working Party Arnaud Rousseau warned in an interview that the sector is in serious danger and the neonicotinoid seed treatment ban must be removed as long as no alternatives exists.



“The Working Party forecasts EU rapeseed production to drop by 6.4% this year, as a result of the two year suspension by the EU of neonicotinoid seed treatments, and more serious problems are expected for the Spring crop”, he warned. “In Finland, a big fall in the rapeseed area has been reported, forcing some farmers to stop producing altogether and causing rapeseed crushing plants to shut

Big drop in EU rapeseed production in 2015 forecast: neonicotinoid seed treatment ban must be lifted unless alternatives found, Copa-Cogeca Oilseeds and Protein Crop Working Party Chairman warns

down. The situation is also particularly bad in Germany – a major oilseed producer - estimating a 1 million tonne cut in rapeseed production for the 2015 harvest, compared to 2014. In Spain, another big producer, a cut in oilseed and protein crop production is foreseen together with a drop in the surface area for sunflowers but final figures still need to be confirmed. Whilst in the UK, a new study produced by the NFU predicts a 36% drop in farmers income as a result of the ban and

We will hold a Conference in May to show the impact and that we are looking for alternatives but none exist. As long as there are no alternative products, the ban must be lifted

pesticide bans. In Italy and my own country, maize producers have also been badly affected. We will carry out a study across Europe to show how bad the impact really is”, he said.

He continued “The problem is no alternative tools for crop protection exist for the spring varieties and crops are being dessimated by flea beetle attacks. We will hold

More and more farmers will not produce oilseeds anymore as it would be too risky if the 2 year suspension for neonicotinoid treatments becomes permanent

a Conference in May to show the impact and that we are looking for alternatives but none exist. As long as there are no alternative products, the ban must be lifted. We will also highlight best practices like spraying the crop at the end of the day”.

“More and more farmers will not produce oilseeds anymore as it would be too risky if the 2 year suspension for neonicotinoid treatments becomes permanent. The issue is a top priority for me in my two year mandate as Chairman of the Oilseeds and Protein Crop Working Party”, he said.

He continued “I also favour developing a European plan to boost the EU’s own supply of protein crops, to reduce our dependence on imported soybean, maintain food security and benefit the environment . Scientific studies have shown the environmental benefits of protein crops in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, benefiting biodiversity and providing a vegetal cover in the winter months. French Farm Minister Stephane Le Foll recently also unveiled a plan on this but it lacks ambition. A more ambitious plan is needed at EU level. We will see how we can develop it in the framework of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). At the moment, yields are too low for these crops to be viable. We must therefore continue to boost research to develop

I also favour developing a European plan to boost the EU’s own supply of protein crops, to reduce our dependence on imported soybean, maintain food security and benefit the environment

higher yielding crops to make them more competitive and economically viable for producers to grow”.

“Another priority for me is to make the CAP simpler, especially the complicated greening rules. I also want to encourage and explain the benefits for Europe of supporting the EU biofuels sector. This sector offers many opportunities in terms of reducing oil dependency and greenhouse gas emissions, stabilising commodity markets, boosting employment and ensuring animal feed supplies. I want to show that it’s not justified to set a limit on biofuels made from arable crops in the target on the use of renewable energy sources in transport. The introduction of ILUC factors is not justified as its based on a false system and is not backed up by science, he warned.



Mr Rousseau is an oilseed and protein crop producer in France and also Vice-President of the French Oilseeds and Protein Crop Federation (FOP).



Farm Africa

In European Year of Development, Adam Bedford embarked on beehive challenge set to raise £50, 000 for Farm Africa Charity

In the European Year of Development, the bee team, led by Adam Bedford from the National Farmers Union of England Wales (NFU), is set to raise £50,000 for Farm Africa to help African farmers feed Africa.

At the end of 2014, the bee team set off to the Nou forest in Tanzania to work on the 'Beehive Challenge'. The group included farmers and industry professionals, and they worked directly with Tanzanian farmers to build beehives for honey production. The project works with 33 villages and 13,661 people.

Adam Bedford from the NFU explained "The aim of the project is two-fold.

Firstly it gives farmers access to better technology. The hives are a different design to the traditional hives which normally have to be smashed open to harvest the honey and which are extremely heavy to lift. The modern hives are lighter and easier to manoeuvre and the honey is easier to harvest, making beekeeping something more women are able to do. The box hives are also more productive. A single hive can produce more than four times as much honey as the log hives each year. That honey significantly increases a family's income, giving them enough money to buy tools and clothes and send their children to school. Those individuals involved in the project have seen their total household increase by an average of 18%".

He continued "Secondly, with 300, 000 hectares of forest lost every year in Tanzania, the project aims to reduce deforestation. The main driver of deforestation is poverty, so with a better and more secure income through honey production the farmers can better protect forests. They act as forest guardians, constantly on the lookout for anything that threatens it. This delivers better futures for some of the most vulnerable people in Tanzania whilst restoring the country's valuable forest reserves".

"The project also encouraged farmers to band together in cooperatives to market and sell the produce locally and in big cities so that they can get a better price for it", he stressed.

The project delivers training to beekeeper associations on group dynamics, entrepreneurship and business



planning. This training aims to strengthen the capacity of beekeepers and support them to form strong co-operatives. Two beekeepers associations have been formed and have met the necessary conditions for formal recognition.

“I wanted to get involved in the project as there are so many parallels as those in the EU. Many of the challenges facing farmers there, like climate change and strengthening farmers positioning in the food chain, are the same. It’s important that in the EU we know what’s happening in Africa and help where we can”, he explained.

The bee teams aims to raise in 2015 a combined £50,000 for Farm Africa, and will be doing this extensively through media work with videos, social media and press articles. The notion of ‘farmers helping farmers’ is extremely powerful, Mr Bedford said.

helps farmers and rural communities unleash their entrepreneurial abilities. It’s an approach built around the charity’s belief that smallholders play a key role in helping Africa’s rural communities thrive and develop.

The project was sponsored by Copa-Cogeca in the European Year of Development **#EYD2015**. If you want to help them raise money, you can donate by visiting <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Beehivechallenge>



Farm Africa is a charity which supports subsistence farmers to build food and income security so that they can grow a better and reliable future for their families. Rather than simply handing them money, the charity runs projects to teach rural communities about sustainable agriculture and forestry techniques, helping them build links to markets and adding value to their produce. Through projects like teaching bee keeping, raffia basket weaving and mushroom farming, the charity



New results from Copa-Cogeca survey shows confidence plummeted amongst farmers towards the end of 2014 and Eurostat also predicts decline in 2014 EU Farm Incomes

A new survey carried out by Copa-Cogeca in ten Member States reveals that, after recovering for one and a half years, confidence in the EU agricultural sector plummeted in the third quarter of 2014, as a result of low agricultural prices.

According to Copa-Cogeca barometer, the loss of confidence was widespread across all countries. With higher supplies of agricultural products and the closure of the Russian market as well as bad weather conditions for crops in some parts of Europe, prices of agricultural products in general went down, dragging down the mood of farmers. High input prices were also a factor. Although cheaper oil prices eased energy-linked inputs it was not enough to compensate for the reduction in output prices.

The new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform also generated mixed reactions across the countries, with farmers in Germany and the UK especially worried about the complicated, overly bureaucratic legislation. Whilst those in Hungary, Poland and Romania were more positive about getting more subsidies, the survey shows. In France, 4 in 10 farmers indicated that they have major difficulties mainly as a result of operating costs and difficult climate conditions. In the Netherlands, farmers were particularly concerned about the drop in pigmeat prices as a result of the Russian export ban. Whilst in Sweden, producers were particularly concerned about the very low prices especially in the dairy and beef sectors. Italian farmers were worried about the EU wine and olive oil harvests hit by the poor weather conditions.

The survey was carried out between September and November 2014. It is carried out twice a year in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden and United Kingdom (England and Wales) and over 6.600 were interviewed. The full report is available at <http://www.copa-cogeca.be/StatisticsandEconomicAnalysis.aspx>

New figures released by the EU statistical office Eurostat also predict a decline of 1.7% in EU farmers' incomes in 2014. But this masks big differences across Member States, with incomes tumbling by as much as 23% in Finland, 19% in Lithuania, 15% in Belgium, 11% in Estonia and Italy mainly as a result of the Russian crisis. And the effects of the Russian crisis might not be fully taken into account in the preliminary estimates. Copa-Cogeca agricultural confidence index may also predict a further deterioration in the future. Targeted support for EU dairy, pigmeat, fruit and vegetable and beef producers hit by the Russian crisis is consequently crucial, together with export promotion and the identification of new market outlets.



“Use of the right form of nitrogen fertilizer is of great importance as different products have different environmental impacts”

Daniella

“Combining good agricultural practice with Directly Available Nitrogen (DAN) fertilizers enhances my nitrogen-use efficiency and minimizes my environmental losses”

Danny

“DAN fertilizers will put enough food on my table. Even when i am grown up”

Dani

www.danfertilizers.com





Leaders at Cogeca presidency business forum underline critical need for agri-cooperatives to be innovative and present 2014 european awards for innovation



It is critical for agri-cooperatives to be innovative to add value to produce, to respond to evolving consumer needs and to take advantage of new market opportunities in an increasingly competitive environment, leaders from the Cogeca Presidency Business Forum underlined in December.

To encourage innovation, the 2014 European Awards for Cooperative Innovation were presented.

Speaking at the Business Forum, Mr Pees highlighted how being innovative and adding value to products ultimately benefits its members the farmers. Joining cooperatives enable farmers to join forces to market their produce and add value to produce to get a higher market return". But the forum not only addressed issues related to product and technological innovation, but also financial innovation which is critical in today's turbulent commodity markets where there is extreme volatility.

Speaking at the event on financial innovation, keynote speaker Professor Dr. ir. Joost M.E. Pennings from Maastricht University and Wageningen University explained "Financial innovation, like using futures contracts to help hedge against risk, is crucial for the performance of agri-cooperatives. By using financial instruments (i.e. futures/options), it helps them to decrease and manage the price volatility which increases members' net proceeds and can create extra value for cooperative".

Mr Pees went on to say "Agri-cooperatives can also use their unique relations with members and take advantage of the additional flow of information gained throughout the whole value chain, as they engage in transactions while they also control and participate in the decision making of the cooperative business".

Presenting the Awards at the Ceremony, Cogeca President Christian Pees said "We received a good number of applications for these highly prestigious Awards this year which aim to stimulate innovation and show how innovative European agricultural cooperatives are. They also aim to encourage other cooperatives to step up their competitiveness and positioning in the food chain and to create more innovative products.

Innovation allows efficiency gains in productivity, with an optimal use of resources. This is critical in view of increasing food demand, limited resources and a competitive marketplace. Agri-cooperatives need to produce more and better products, in a sustainable manner and ensure economic gains and a better market return benefiting farmers. The three Awards presented here today show how agri-cooperatives can respond to the evolving needs of consumers and the food chain and capture more of the added value of the product".

The Special Achievement Award for innovation in food processing was presented by Mr Pees to the French cereal cooperative "Dijon Cereales" which used an innovative approach in creating a long term research project to increase the added value of its cereal products. The product G-Nutrition brioche bread was developed specifically to fight malnutrition amongst the elderly and it is being marketed and distributed in health facilities.

To encourage innovation, the 2014 European Awards for Cooperative Innovation were presented.

The second Award for “Bioeconomy/Resource Efficiency” was presented by Cogeca Vice-President Martin Pycha to the Spanish agri-cooperative Valle del Jerte for its innovative approach in creating a special consultation system to advice farmers on the more efficient use of water. Valle del Jerte, in collaboration with its members, has developed an efficient information system to monitor, measure and analyse irrigation needs. Results from the project showed how it had caused an efficient use of water, as well as an improvement in quality.

The third award for Entrepreneurship/CSR/Member service was presented by Cogeca Vice-President Maria-Antonia Figueiredo to the Spanish cooperative Cooperativa Ganadera de Caspe for its innovative approach in creating a network of excellence among the executives of the various cooperative units across the supply chain to provide tailor made support to members in their decision-making. This system has led to a big increase in its transactions with its members as well as an overall improvement in the economic performance of the cooperative.





Finnish Farmers Go Naked for Charity: Calendar success in Finland

The Finnish Union for Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK) released a hot new calendar for 2015, featuring over 20 young farmers from Finland who volunteered to go naked for charity.

Klaus Hartikainen, MTK Communications Director said “MTK’s young farmers wanted to raise money for charity. Calendar profits will be given to The Eating Disorder Association of Finland (Syömishäiriöliitto-SYLI ry) for the benefit of eating disorder patients and their families. With this in mind the name of the calendar was chosen as: “Genuine is beautiful”, which delivers a message that people are beautiful just the way they are”.

He insisted “Ideas of the pictures came from the farmers themselves but photo-shootings were assisted by a professional photographer, producer and graphic designer. This charity wall calendar was one of the key PR-activities for the young Farmer’s theme year. The now concluded theme year at MTK (Central Union for Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners in Finland) was called the “Year of Passion”. This name reflecting

Young farmers also wanted to show-off their positive and forward-looking attitude

the attitude and dedication the Young Farmers have for their vocation. This dedication can also be seen in the calendar”.

Young farmers also wanted to show-off their positive and forward-looking attitude. The young farmers are active entrepreneurs that do not hesitate to stick their necks out.

Even though the idea of making a nude calendar isn’t really anything new, young farmers were able to bring a fresh approach by doing a calendar of food-producers with a twinkle in their eye. Every calendar picture shows young farmers doing farm activities, just naked and together. Be it in the fields or forest, inside the





production stalls or with machinery. The beauty of Finnish countryside in the summer can also be seen in the pictures, he explained.

The Calendar created a lot of media attention and buzz in social media both in Finland and in the neighboring countries. The project also created a positive atmosphere among the young farmers. Awareness of MTK's activities for young farmers raised to a new level.

All the 5 000 calendar copies are now sold. Part of them were sold in various events during the theme year and part of them via the online store of MTK. The Calendar raised a substantial amount to charity. The money-check will be given to The Eating Disorder Association of Finland in the near future, Klaus Hartikainen, MTK Communications Director said

MTK's theme year of young farmers as a whole was a success. The year included dozens of activities on local, national and international level. Another successful PR-activity was a special-equipped pink Valtra-tractor "summer-cat" that travelled around Finland during the summer of 2014. The tractor also created a great deal of positive media attention together with all the farmer and consumer events it took part in.



Meri Ojanen is the Young Farmers' Ombudsman and some of the calendar pictures can be seen on MTK's webpages: http://www.mtk.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/tiedotteet_2014/maaliskuu/fi_FI/Nuorten_kalenteri_julkaisujakuvat/

The Irish farmers also released a hot new 2015 Irish Farmers Calendar with proceeds going to their nominated charity. It reached number 7 in Grazia magazine year of lust this year! See here for details: <http://www.farmercalendar.com/contact.php#nav>

EU organic sector one of fastest growing agriculture sectors: can grow to reach 15 - 25% of EU agricultural area if right rules in place, Copa-Cogeca Chairman says



In response to consumer demands, the EU organic sector is one of the fastest growing agriculture sectors, and it can increase to reach 15 to 25% of the EU agricultural area if the right rules are in place, Chairman of Copa-Cogeca's Organic Working Party Edouard Rousseau said in an interview.

But he warned that the EU Commissions' initial proposal to revise EU organic production and labelling rules risked jeopardising the dynamism and fast growth of the sector.

"The Commission was moving too fast without giving industry time to reflect on the best way forward. We are ready to work on it but we need time. The current system has worked well, built up over 20 years, and what we need is evolution", he insisted. This has also been called for by many MEPs and EU Farm Ministers.

"We are ready to work with the Latvian Presidency on a compromise plan for the sector if it takes into account our key concerns", he added

Outlining key points, Mr Rousseau said "To respond to demand and support the growth of the organic market, we want to maintain mixed farms in the sector as a ban will deter farmers from converting to organic farming. Producers should also continue to be allowed to use non-organic animals for breeding purposes when a certain race does not exist in the organic sector and then convert. Otherwise it would run counter to the principle of genetic diversity, which is defended in organic farming. We also want to maintain the use of conventional seed and plant reproductive material otherwise ending this from

December 31 2021 will limit the range of varieties on offer to producers or make crop production impossible due to a lack of supply in some areas and limit the range of biodiversity. In addition, the requirement to have yearly controls should be maintained as it helps to maintain a regular link between certification bodies and operators, considering the rapid changes to regulation and the complexity of the regulatory framework", he stressed.

We have a whole list of points which need to be included in the new rules set to be introduced in 2017, he added.

Nonetheless, there are some positive elements introduced by the Commission vis-a-vis trade with non-EU countries in view of ensuring fairer competition between EU products and imports that can bear the same EU logo, thus maintaining consumer confidence", he concluded.



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The EU needs regulatory policies that foster rather than discourage this innovative spirit. Find out how Europe can ensure its place as a world leader in innovation and economic, social and environmental security: www.visionforeurope.eu



Ian Pigott explains new innovative techniques introduced on his arable farm and the launch of his farm school promoting healthy eating habits to school children.

A Farmers View

Coming from a family farm in Harpenden, English arable crops farmer Ian Pigott outlined in an interview new innovative technologies being introduced on his farm as well as the launch of his farm school promoting healthy eating habits to school children.

Located just 20 miles from the centre of London, he runs an arable farm growing barley, oilseeds and oats. The farm is a LEAF (linking environment and farming) demonstration farm.

of the year. We will grow Spring peas, Spring barley, oats and oilseeds this year and use a lot less inputs”, he explained.

In addition, he Chairs Farming and Countryside education which is part funded by the National Farmers’ Union (NFU) of England and Wales and he has been involved in establishing Bright Crop with the NFU. The aim of Bright Crop is to attract young people from outside agriculture into farming, targeting 13-16 year olds, with school visits informing children of the career possibilities that the agriculture and agri-food sector has to offer. Not only farming but also agriculture and food-related jobs.

In the UN International Year of Soils 2015, he told Copa-Cogeca how he is making a big investment on the farm this year, buying a zero tillage drill. “It is a really big move. The soils have been degraded over the years becoming more resistant to black grass and fungicides. The reason behind the move is to drive soil health. By cutting out tillage, soil health will be improved a lot, getting organic matters up and increasing bacterial activity. We will also have more Spring crops and we will have cover crops at all times




In addition, he set up last year his own farm school which takes up to 100 children, teaching them about the environment, the importance of healthy soils and showing them in the kitchen how wheat is turned to flour and then to bread. The aim of the charity is to bring children in touch with farming and food, showing them where the food comes from and encouraging healthy eating habits at a young age, to help combat growing issues like obesity, he said. “Some children have never been on a farm before and I see enormous benefits from it”, he added. The conference room is also rented out to help fund the charity.

Together with LEAF, he also started in 2006 Open Farm Sunday where 420 farms open their doors to the public in the UK to bring people more in touch with agriculture and nature. Last year 207, 000 visitors were received, he said. In 2014, he was awarded the Kleckner Trade and Technology Advancement Award for his achievements.

For more info, see www.face-online.org.uk, www.thralesend.co.uk

Open farming days are a growing phenomenon, taking place for 30 years in Belgium, and also in countries like the Netherlands, France, Germany, Latvia. It brings the public more in touch with agriculture and how food is produced, promoting healthy eating habits, good farming practices and showing the benefit to society at large of farmers and farmers cooperatives in preserving the countryside. It's something Copa-Cogeca will develop its work on.





Few EU rural development programmes for 2014-20 adopted: Copa-Cogeca urges EU Commission to find solution otherwise risk being delayed until June 2015 leaving farmers, forest owners, cooperatives unable to plan ahead.



With only 27 out of 118 operational programmes approved, Copa-Cogeca urges the European Commission to find a solution, otherwise they risk being held up until June 2015, which could impact negatively on EU farmers, forest owners and agri-cooperatives activities.

The programmes approved so far were for Denmark, Austria, Poland, Portugal (Continental Portugal, Azores, Madeira), Finland (Mainland, Aland), Germany (National, Rural Network and two regions, Bavaria, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, North Rhine-Westphalia), Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, UK (England), Belgium (Flanders), Estonia, France (Mayotte, National rural Network). Around 90 programmes have therefore not been included in the carry over procedure and risk being delayed until June 2015.

“The European Commission needs to find a solution for the rural development programmes that will not enter into the carry over procedure and will be postponed due to procedural reasons relating to revisions of the EU budget (Multiannual Financial Framework MFF)”,

Chairwoman of
Copa-Cogeca Rural
Development
Working Party
Maira Dzelzskaleja
warned .



“Copa-Cogeca has major concerns about the fact that Member States that will be ready to start introducing their rural development operational programme will not be able to start. Farmers and their cooperatives need to be reassured that they can continue with their plans but for the moment they are left in an uncertain and difficult situation”, she stressed.

Around 90 programmes have therefore not been included in the carry over procedure and risk being delayed until June 2015.

She continued “Up against increasing challenges, farmers, forest owners and agri-cooperatives commitments cannot be put in danger. Their

contribution to growth and jobs in EU rural areas and to climate and environmental goals is crucial and this needs to be taken into account. Measures relating to investment aid and support to help young farmers set up are of utmost importance to the sector. Support is crucial to ensure a viable EU farming and forestry sector and to guarantee generational renewal.

New EU promotion policy has great potential to help EU diversify into new markets, but crucial to ensure rules implemented correctly, Copa-Cogeca working party chairman says

The EU's new promotion policy for agriculture produce set to apply in 2016 will help EU producers and agri-cooperatives diversify into new markets faced with the Russian export ban, Chairman of Copa-Cogeca working party on promotion Jerzy Wierzbicki said.

But technical support must be stepped up to ensure its effective. The European Commission must also not start unraveling the deal and go beyond the political agreement struck by the EU when drafting the implementing rules, he warned.

Mr Wierzbicki stressed "The new ambitious policy looks good as it will greatly simplify administrative procedures and reduce red tape for industry. This has been a key factor reducing uptake in the past. It's also good that funds have been increased from 30 to 60 million euros since the last call due to the Russian ban, and will be increased to a total annual budget from 60 to 200 Mio until 2019".

"Promotion policy plays an important role in helping to ensure that our diverse range of quality European agricultural products are recognised both in Europe and worldwide. This will be crucial with the upcoming opportunities in the emerging economies. But it will

We also believe that the Commission is not giving enough time vis vis the duration of the campaigns. Six years is not enough.

be vital to ensure that the proposing organisations get proper technical support so that they can understand the rules better when submitting their programmes. The Commission needs to get on this year with establishing the platform for stakeholders and start the training set out in the new scheme before the promotion campaigns start in 2016", he said.

"I am also worried that industry is not being consulted enough and that the Commission is going beyond the political agreement struck by the EU on the new scheme when drafting the implementing rules. For example, the Commission is trying to make it more difficult for organisations to promote national quality schemes in the delegated acts. Planned rules for simple programmes may have a negative effect for two thirds of the existing campaigns. Also the proposal concerning the visibility of brands is impractical. They will be not visible", he warned.

"We also believe that the Commission is not giving enough time vis vis the duration of the campaigns. Six years is not enough. It takes time to get the programmes up and running and then we need to continue with the promotion activity. More flexibility is crucial. The funds need to be used to increase our market shares not just to kick-off projects in new markets. I also believe that the funds should be used equally for campaigns in EU and non-EU country markets. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, it is just as important to promote our produce also on the domestic market", he said.

Wrapping up, Mr Wierzbicki insisted "The new policy will help us to find new export markets for our produce and should help the EU agriculture and food industry to stand the increasing competition on the Internal Market"





Top Priorities for Commissioner Hogan include CAP simplification and combatting unfair practices in the food chain.

Top priorities for EU Farm Commissioner Phil Hogan under his mandate are simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and combatting unfair and abusive practices in the EU food chain to ensure producers get a decent return for their produce.

This was underlined by Mr Hogan in February this year at the Conference of the National Farmers Union (NFU) of England and Wales in Birmingham as well as at the Spanish agri cooperative organisation (Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias) Congress in Spain and at the CAP networking event in Brussels.

Mr Hogan insisted “I remain adamant that the stability that the CAP provides to the agricultural sector provides a massive

boost to economic growth and jobs in rural areas and all the way up and down the food supply chain. While I will robustly defend the importance and value of the CAP, I will listen closely to constructive feedback regarding its implementation. I believe that improvement is possible in many areas, which is why I have made simplification a top priority for my work programme in 2015. We must take every possible step to allow farmers achieve their full business and job-creating potential. Simpler rules will make for greater competitiveness, but achieving simplification will not necessarily be simple! We must be pragmatic and flexible in our approach, targeting changes that will improve the work of farmers without diminishing the operational effectiveness of the CAP as a whole. I must also underline that not all of the elements you criticise were imposed by Brussels. In

order to move forward on this, I have already launched a comprehensive screening exercise of the entire CAP to identify which sections may need simplifying and which, in line with the subsidiarity principle, should be better left to the Member States. I will listen closely to the farmers of Europe as they deliver feedback on the implementation of the new CAP measures. You, the custodians of the soil, are best placed to let policymakers know what works well, and what could work better. I have outlined a number of areas where our rules can and should be simplified over the next months and years. Firstly, the new direct payments regime. I will honour the previous Commission’s pledge to review, after the first year of application, the rules on the Ecological Focus Area. I also commit to review other areas within direct payments based on the critical evaluation of farmers on the ground. If a simplifying measure can be taken to improve the lives of farmers without re-opening the basic policy decisions of the 2013 reform, I will give it serious consideration. Secondly, more than 200 Commission regulations implementing the Common Market Organisation will be reviewed and simplified. This exercise has significant simplification potential for operators in the agri-food sector, which I fully expect UK farmers to exploit to the greatest degree possible”.

A key issue for Mr Hogan is also to work on tackling unfair and abusive practices in the food chain to improve farmers profit margins. It’s not acceptable that their profit margins are squeezed, he warned. “Farmers have to deal with CAP budget cuts, market volatility and terrible weather.

The last thing they need is supply chains that are not fair to everyone. All players in the food chain should realise that it is imperative that producers get a decent return for their raw material. Without producers none of the downstream businesses would even exist. I am following closely the latest developments in the UK and the new powers given to the Groceries Adjudicator to enforce its Code. It is of interest to all of us", he stressed

The Grocers Supplier Code of Good Practice came into force in the UK in February 2010 and it is legally binding. As it became clear that there needs to be someone to make sure that the rules are properly enforced, an adjudicator was created, who can impose fines when codes of good practice are broken, to ensure unfair and abusive practices are prevented. And Mr Hogan told the NFU that the adjudicator "may provide a model" for EU-wide policy.

The European Commission is currently also working to improve access to finance for farmers, particularly young farmers, as they start their career in agriculture. We are working on this in close cooperation with the European Investment Bank, he concluded.

“I remain adamant that the stability that the CAP provides to the agricultural sector provides a massive boost to economic growth and jobs in rural areas and all the way up and down the food supply chain





MEP La Via sets out priorities on agriculture in new mandate as Chairman of European Parliaments Environment Committee

In an interview with Copa-Cogeca, new Chairman of European Parliaments Environment Committee MEP Giovanni La Via underlined the need for a major simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and a cut in the huge number of penalties charged to farmers due to the new greening rules.

“Much more simplification is needed in the new CAP, especially in the greening rules”, Mr La Via warned. “Farmers are penalized too much under the rules. Sometimes a very small error when applying the measures can cause a big cut in the payment made to farmers for providing these environmental services, he explained. There are far too

Farmers are penalized too much under the rules.

many sanctions and we need to discuss before 2017 how to change the basic rules on the greening payment. There has been a lot of difficulties in Member States in applying the new CAP rules, with different systems in force. It has also come in for criticism from the EU Court of Auditors”, he said.

European Commissioner Hogan has already launched a comprehensive screening exercise of the entire agricultural legislation. And Mr La Via hopes Mr Hogan will come up with new proposals, and make changes this year on the greening rules and on simplification.

Copa and Cogeca have also sent a letter to the EU Commission outlining areas where simplification should apply. Copa and Cogeca warn that EU farmers and cooperatives must be given time to adapt and payments must not be cut unfairly in the first years of reform. Not only are the greening measures under the new CAP proving burdensome for farmers, but basic questions on how to implement the new rules remain unanswered. The risk of unintentional errors during the first years of implementing the CAP will therefore be high.

In addition, top priorities on agriculture for MEP La Via during his mandate will be the upcoming EU Commission plan for a new alcohol strategy

In addition, top priorities on agriculture for MEP La Via during his mandate will be the upcoming EU Commission plan for a new alcohol strategy. “This could have strong impact on the EU agriculture sector, especially on wine consumption, if the Commission proposes to put the energy content on wine labels”, he warned. He also intends to look at labelling provisions for products containing genetically modified organisms being circulated inside and outside the EU; There be provisions saying the product “contains GMO material”, he said.

Other priorities include making progress on the EU plant health and animal health proposals and official controls, especially the issue of fees and on EU proposals relating to medicated feed and veterinary medicines.

He will also make headway on origin labelling for processed products. MEPs believe that meat used as an ingredient in processed foods, such as lasagne, should be labelled by country of origin as is already the case with bovine fresh meat They urged the European Commission in February, which published a report on the issue in late 2013, to come up with legislative proposals in order to rebuild consumer confidence in the wake of the horsemeat scandal and other food fraud cases.



Demand for bio-pesticides really growing, but hindered by long, overly bureaucratic regulatory system, IBMA President warns



IBMA President Willem Ravensberg told Copa-Cogeca that there is a strong move towards using bio-pesticides on crops, but warned that the regulatory system for approving products is too long, preventing the market from developing.

“Demand for using bio-pesticides is really growing as they are more environmentally friendly, low risk and sustainable than other plant protection products. Every company in the plant protection industry is active in bio-pesticides. But a major problem hindering the development of the industry is the overly bureaucratic EU regulatory system and long approval system”, he pointed out.

“We have made some progress in the last 20 years since the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA) was developed in 1995, but it’s still a major issue for us. Appropriate guidelines need to be developed as biological products are very different from other products. The administrative procedures are also very long. Since 2007, I hoped it would be faster. But no, it’s still very lengthy with products taking 4-5 years to be approved. There is also a waiting list of nearly two years for product registration. The EU sustainable use

“A fast direct system must be developed with a preliminary approval system so that we can get products to the market quicker. I have presented my proposals to member states, the European Commission and MEPs. We have also developed a roadmap with Copa-Cogeca. Bio-pesticides provide farmers with good tools to effectively manage pests and diseases. But they still only account for 3-4 % of total plant protection products used worldwide. So there’s a lot to do. We need to work together to get the system improved. IBMA which has 240 members will work hard to create this today for tomorrow. There is a strong move towards using bio-pesticides and it’s going to grow even more, with good innovative products”, he concluded.

« The administrative procedures are also very long. Since 2007, I hoped it would be faster. But no, it’s still very lengthy with products taking 4-5 years to be approved »

directive states that non-chemical products should be given priority but nothing has been done. The review of how the mutual recognition system works in member states has also been delayed. The study will take 1 year and a report in 2016 so no action will be taken before 2 to 3 years”, he explained.



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