

EU

Farmers & Agri-Cooperatives



Focus

Future CAP, EU Budget, trade and achieving
#fairfoodchain under the spotlight

copa***cogeca**

european farmers

european agri-cooperatives

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◆ New Code of Conduct on agricultural data sharing launched to move into digital age



A joint initiative was launched at a high-level event in April organized by the EU agri-food chain in Brussels to protect and share data. It will enable farmers and cooperatives to swiftly move into an era of digitally enhanced farming.

The high-level event was attended by EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan who said “The era of big data is upon us. Making progress in precision agriculture has to be the rule not the exception”.

“Accurate agricultural data is vital to develop precision farming and enable farmers and cooperatives to produce more using less resources. Big data is seen as the next major driver for productivity gains in agriculture”, added Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen.

For example, in one project, a contract was created between a potato producer and agricultural contractor to provide information on optimal inputs for his field using data from the machinery sensors.

But to be fully effective, data sharing between different stakeholders needs to be conducted in a fair and transparent way.

This EU Code of Conduct on Agricultural Data Sharing by Contractual Arrangement agreed by Copa and Cogeca, CEMA, Fertilizers Europe, CEETAR, CEJA, ECPA, EFFAB, FEFAC, ESA, Coceral aims to achieve just this. It sets out key guidelines for operators to follow combined with

a check list. This will help farmers and agri-cooperatives to have access to the shared data for their business plans. It will give operators confidence to invest and share data.

The guidelines underline that the operator responsible for producing the data has the right to determine who can access and use the data. But they will not be liable for damages arising from the use of this data by machines, data users and so on. Contracts outlining the collection, access, storage and use of the data as well as privacy and confidentiality clauses must also be agreed.

● Reactions

“I welcome the EU Code of conduct on agricultural data sharing initiated by the stakeholders of the agro-food sector. As Europe is moving towards a more modern and more sustainable Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), technological solutions will be more important than ever, giving precision agriculture and data-driven solutions a crucial role to play,” EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan said.

“As we move towards completing the European data economy by making more data available and flow freely, I am happy to see the agri-food sector joining forces to tackle an important bottleneck on the journey towards digital agriculture,” added Commissioner Gabriel.

Check out Copa and Cogecas website to discover more details of this EU Code of Conduct on Agricultural Data Sharing by Contractual Arrangement to reap the benefits of digital agriculture.

Simplification must be at heart of future Common Agriculture Policy (CAP)



With farmers stifled by excessive levels of red tape, simplification of the future CAP has been singled out as a number one priority by EU Ministers, MEPs, farm unions and cooperatives across the EU.

“The next CAP must provide simpler rules and policy tools for farmers to use”, underlined Copa President Joachim Rukwied. **“The Commission plans will not result in a real simplification of rules for farmers. We must guarantee that the CAP remains a truly common policy without any renationalisation that could endanger the functioning of the Single Market and lead to distortions of competition”**, added Rukwied..

“We are very concerned about the impact of these proposals. Direct payments, which are the best and by far most efficient way to stabilize farmers’ incomes and to help them to better manage income risks, are being eroded further under this proposal. The EU Commission proposal must be improved significantly to ensure a viable sector”, he warned.

● MEPS

The EU’s farming policy can be further simplified but must remain a common policy with a proper budget to deliver, Agriculture MEPs told Bulgarian Minister Rumen Porodzanov. “Increased subsidiarity is welcome as it could give more flexibility to the benefit of farmers. It could also help cut excessive bureaucracy, a goal the EPP Group has worked long for. However, at the same time we must strictly reject the renationalisation of the CAP. The new post-2020 CAP must guarantee that European food production is sufficient and safe, that it protects European farmers’ competitiveness on international markets and also safeguards against market fluctuations such as price volatility and other unpredictable market crises”, said EPP Group MEP Herbert Dorfmann, draftsman of Parliament’s Report on the Future of Food and Farming.

For Italian MEP Paolo de Castro “the plans go in the right direction”. “It’s good to give Member States a menu of measures to choose from to give them sufficient flexibility to apply the right environmental measures in the right way, whilst avoiding any kind of renationalisation of the CAP. Ways to save water on a farm, for instance, will differ in Ireland and Greece”, he pointed out.

“We also need a different philosophy. We need to give farmers incentives to meet high environmental and welfare standards, rather than penalise them if they don’t meet them”, added De Castro.

● Ministers

The Bulgarian Presidency’s conclusions on the future of food and farming, which have been backed by many EU Farm Ministers, also underline that the new delivery model must bring a real simplification of rules for farmers.

● EU Commission

The plans were presented by EU Commissioner Phil Hogan who claimed that that it is more of “an evolution than a revolution” of CAP policy, with a high level of environmental ambition. The Commission believes that the “one size fits all approach” doesn’t work and therefore has proposed a new delivery model . This would leave it up to Member States to define how they will meet environmental and climate goals and define practices and controls most appropriate to their country or region.



● What do farmers and cooperatives think of the details?

“We welcome the Commission’s objective to streamline measures and to simplify rules”, said Rukwied. But he voiced concerns about the new delivery model and the practicalities of performance based measures.

The plan to merge the current greening and cross-compliance into a new enhanced conditionality will increase the conditions that farmers have to abide to and that, in Copa and Cogeca’s view, does not amount to simplification. The implementation of the new delivery model must bring about simpler measures and requirements for farmers as well as streamlining the conditions for direct payments, controls and administrative requirements.

“It is good news that the Commission has proposed keeping both pillars of the CAP in its plan with direct payments in the first pillar, without co-funding, to help stabilize farmer’s incomes. But we oppose any capping or degressivity of payments as suggested by the Commission,” warned Rukwied..

“We are pleased too that the Commission has put greater focus on smart farming and on risk management measures in its plan. This is something that we called for and it will be important to see how this pans out. Copa and Cogeca believe that the risk management measures must remain voluntary for producers to apply and remain in the second pillar of the CAP. It is welcome news too that market safety nets will be kept”, said Rukwied.



Cogeca President Thomas Magnusson highlighted the importance of having a strong rural development pillar to ensure the vitality of rural areas. ***“Broad band access is vital so that farmers and cooperatives can make use of new technologies like smart farming and encourage generation renewal.*** We welcome the fact that the Commission’s plan recognises that it is crucial to boost investment, to increase our sectors contribution to the bioeconomy and circular economy and to have more uptake of new technologies and digital based opportunities. We welcome too that research and innovation and advisory services driven by farmers’ needs are considered important tools to help our sectors to address challenges. Finally, we need to continue measures under the CAP to encourage farmers to join cooperatives as this can improve farmers positioning in the food chain. More focus needs to be put on this”, said Magnusson.

Defending the plan, EU Commissioner Phil Hogan insisted that it is not about renationalisation. The targets and objectives would still be set at EU level and Member States plans would need to be approved by the EU, with strict controls.



◆ EU Commission proposal on future EU budget post 2020 sparks controversy

The European Commission proposed in May a cut in Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funding in the next Multi-annual Financial Framework for 2021-2027, sparking opposition from key EU Agricultural Ministers, MEPs, farm unions and agri-cooperatives.

The European Farmers and Agri-cooperatives organisations Copa and Cogeca issued a statement expressing strong disappointment about the proposed cut in funding for the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

“Copa and Cogeca disagree with any proposals to cut CAP spending in the future EU budget. Farmers’ incomes are at the level of 40% of average wages in others sectors of the economy. Yet they are the ones who produce high quality food every day and are called to deliver more for sustainability and to tackle climate change. The proposed budget cuts threaten not only farmers livelihoods and vast parts of Europe’s rural areas, but also the delivery of the EU’s environmental and social goals. We recognize the effort of the Commission to increase EU resources to respond to the upcoming political needs, but more must be done for Europe and European farmers. We also welcome many Member States’ willingness to contribute more for the future of Europe” , said Copa President Joachim Rukwied.

Cogeca President Magnusson insisted “With the world population expected to grow and with the agriculture sector facing increasing challenges, now is not the time to cut back on expenditure and jeopardize the multiple benefits of agriculture. **We have serious concerns about the potential trade and budget impact of Brexit on European farmers and their cooperatives.** We believe that farmers and their families shouldn’t have to pay twice the price of Brexit. The current budget costs less than a cup of coffee per day to each EU citizen and in return ensures high quality safe nutritious food for 500 million consumers and contributes to environment protection, growth and jobs. Agricultural expenditure delivers very good value for money for all citizens across the EU and it must be maintained and stabilized.



In this respect, the proposed increase on research and innovation expenditure in agriculture and bioeconomy is most welcome. We farmers and agri-cooperatives are ready to play our part in it”.

These are the reasons why Copa and Cogeca call for the maintenance and stabilization of the CAP budget in real terms over the next programming period.

● What’s in the proposal ?

The Commission has proposed a long-term budget of €1,135 billion in commitments (expressed in 2018 prices) over the period from 2021 to 2027, which corresponds to 1.11% of the EU27’s gross national income (GNI). The Commission proposes to fund it through a combination of fresh money and redeployments and savings foreseeing a 5% cut in CAP funding, including a 4% overall reduction in EU farmers direct payments. Further moves towards external convergence are nevertheless foreseen, with an increase in direct payments in some countries including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Portugal, Slovakia and Poland. CAP market related measures will suffer a 5% cut except for fruit and vegetables. The co-funding rate for EU rural development policy will also be reduced by 10 percentage points causing Member States to contribute more for the same level of support. Under Horizon Europe - the Union’s research programme - funds will be more than doubled for agriculture, rural development, food and the bioeconomy. The proposal includes changes in Member States contributions to the budget.

● Ministers reactions?

The French government viewed the proposal as “unacceptable”. “France cannot accept any direct cut in farmer’s incomes”, said the French Agriculture Minister Stephane Travert in a statement. “This cut poses an unprecedented risk for the viability of farmers by dangerously impacting on their revenues, for whom direct payments play an essential safety net”, he explained. His position has been supported by other countries such as Ireland.

Whilst Denmark, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands oppose a substantial rise in their contributions to the EU budget. The Danish Finance Minister Kristian Jensen is calling for an overall cut in the EU budget post 2020, saying that it is wrong to increase the budget when there will be fewer Member States. Sweden and the Netherlands have also opposed any rise in their budget contributions.

In response to the Danish, Swedish, Dutch and Austrian governments calls, Danish Agriculture and Food Council President Martin Merrild and Swedish Farm Union President Palle Borgstrom issued a statement calling for a strong EU agricultural budget post 2020. Many other farm unions and cooperatives across the EU issued statements and held press events opposing the cuts.

● MEPs reaction?

Czesław Adam Siekierski Chairman of Parliaments Agriculture Committee warned “The cuts to the post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy’s budget, as proposed by the Commission, are disproportionate, unjust and should be reversed”.

“The EU’s next budget plan should boost funding for innovation and maintain support for European farming, fisheries and internal EU development, or cohesion, despite the loss of UK funding after Brexit”, said the Portuguese MEP José Manuel Fernandes, the EPP Group’s Spokesman in the Budgets Committee. European Parliament’s Socialists and Democrats Party was also disappointed by the proposal. Vice-President Isabelle Thomas said “Such a proposal would be unable to live up to our citizens expectations or deliver significant actions on youth unemployment, sustainable development, climate change, the social pillar, agriculture, cohesion and international and humanitarian aids”.



● Next steps:

“I strongly believe we should aim to have an agreement before the European Parliament elections next year”, said European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker which Copa and Cogeca support.

Tough negotiations are consequently expected in the months ahead on the proposal, especially since unanimity is required from Member States in order to get a deal. Copa and Cogeca will continue to press for no cuts in agricultural spending, otherwise farmers livelihoods and the future of rural areas will be jeopardised not to mention quality food supplies for a growing world.





Copa and Cogeca reflect on future of EU olive sector in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)



Copa and Cogeca outlined key elements crucial for a viable EU olive sector in the future CAP at an event held in European Parliament this Spring

Chairman of the EU table olives and olive oil working party Vasilis Pyrgiotis said

“The EU is a major player in the global olive sector, accounting for 70% of global olive oil production and 32% of the global table olives production.

Our production is growing in Europe and worldwide, boosted by a positive image and a rise in consumption due to the many health benefits of the sector as well as by forward looking initiatives undertaken by our producers. Innovative measures in the CAP also help to drive the sector”.

Outlining key ways to ensure a sustainable future for the sector in the CAP, Vasilis Pyrgiotis said “It will be important to strengthen producers position in the food supply chain to ensure that they get a fairer share of the market price of the product as they often have very poor margins. This can be achieved by encouraging producers to join producer organisations like cooperatives”.

With growers facing extreme volatility on the market, it will also be important to put more focus on measures to help farmers better manage risk and on tools to manage the market. A market observatory for the sector is also vital to help producers better understand the market.

Finally we need to better inform consumers of the many health and environmental benefits of this product and make sure that the sector is not used as a bargaining chip in the upcoming trade deals, Pyrgiotis concluded.

The event was hosted by MEPs Giovanni La Via, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Clara Eugenia Aguilera Garcia who also underlined the multiple benefits of the sector and the contribution of the CAP to help its development. This will help feed into the Commission proposal on the future of food and farming set to be released this Summer.





Slow EU grain exports adding to downward market pressure

EU grain exports have been very slow this season, partly as a result of the late harvest, which is expected to enhance EU grain stocks and put further downward pressure on prices, warned Chairman of the Cereals Working Party Max Schulman.

“Our cost-price structure needs to be improved as the high input costs reduces our ability to compete”, added Schulman. “Costs must be cut and duties on fertilizer imports removed. We also need more accurate information on the fertilizers market”, he said. “

***“Smart farming can help farmers too as it enables them to produce more sustainably and competitively and save on input costs.*”**

The joint EU Code of Conduct on Agricultural Data Sharing agreed by industry will encourage farmers to enter the digital age. Focus needs to be put on this too in the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which needs to have a good budget behind it, with a strong first pillar”, Schulman stressed.

Focus on tools to help farmers better manage risk is also important though they need to remain voluntary to apply in the second pillar of the CAP.

● **New plant protection products ?**

“Farmers need a comprehensive tool box for plant production products (PPPs) at their disposal to maximize their performance. I am very disappointed about the EU move to impose a total ban on the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments on all outdoor crops, including pelleted beet seed, when there was no justification for it. All farmers

rely on PPPs to fight pests and diseases, irrespective of the sector or production method. This ban will decrease farmers’ toolbox in an area where there are almost no alternatives. The EU needs to come up with alternative solutions. A comprehensive plan is vital”.

“This is more important than ever with the increasingly extreme weather patterns that we are experiencing and when harvests are becoming less predictable. That’s why better market information is also vital. New plant varieties that can cope with the climate of today are essential. New breeding techniques (NBTs) will play a crucial role here”, Schulman explained.

● **EU grain production**

He pointed out that this year’s EU grain harvest is expected to reach average levels at around 300-305 million tonnes. But this figure could change significantly as producers across Europe have been affected again by adverse weather conditions, ranging from severe drought in Portugal and Spain to floods in parts of Northern Central Europe like in 2017.

This year’s EU-28 oilseeds area also remains quite stable, but prices are low, also due to large global supply and big stocks.

Chairman of Copa and Cogeca’s Oilseeds Working Party consequently Arnaud Rousseau consequently urged the Commission to act as soon as possible and register biodiesel imports from Argentina and implement countervailing duty on biodiesel imports originating from Argentina.

The area under protein crops remains also quite stable, but cuts were seen in some countries in view of the plant

protection product ban on Ecological focus Areas (EFAs). “It sends a very bad signal to industry”, warned the Chairmen.

● **Protein crop plan**

With the EU facing a deficit in protein crop supply , Rousseau supported the EU Commission initiative to present a report on the EU protein crop strategy by the end of the year, underlining their clear environmental benefits in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, benefiting biodiversity and improving soil quality.



◆ Innovation by Spanish organic wine grower Joaquin Fernandez

Looking across exceptional views over the entire Ronda valley in Southern Spain, organic wine grower Joaquin Fernandez talked to Copa and Cogeca about the innovations introduced on his vineyard and how he diversified into agri-tourism to maximize the potential of his business.

“It is quite a small family run estate reaching just six and half hectares and producing 22, 000 bottles of entirely organic wine a year”, explained Joaquin Fernandez. “We have a variety of red, white and rose wines, certified for their commitment to quality by the Spanish Ministry. The younger wine exudes a fruitier taste and the older ones which are kept in barrels for up to a year give a more mature flavor, with corks used to bottle them as there are many forests in Spain”, he said.



“Last Summer, we were hit by extreme temperatures, like many of the wine producing countries in Europe, forcing us to harvest early. This reduced the volumes produced but the quality of the grape was nevertheless good”, insisted Fernandez.

“Other challenges confront us like the red spider mite which can destroy an entire crop. To overcome this, we grow a mixture of rosemary, mint and lavender which attracts bees to kill off the red spider mites.

We also encourage biodiversity, natural fertilisation of our soils and weed control, using the stems and skins from the grape for example to fertilise our soils and to keep them healthy. In the Winter months, sheep graze our land”, he explained.

To maximize the potential of his business, he has diversified into agri-tourism inviting visitors for wine tasting sessions and a tour of the wine cellars as well as the chance to enjoy the idyllic landscape.





“We organize events each year here such as weddings and lunches for up to 500 guests enabling them to sample the amazing views across the whole of the Ronda valley in the sunshine whilst tasting organic wines and a range of quality farm produce”, stressed Fernandez. Some of these products – the organic wine, cheese, olive oil, honey - are on sale on the estate.

A new attraction on the estate is the introduction of horse-riding.

“There is nothing more relaxing and peaceful than enjoying horseback riding with the assistance of professionals across the vines, in order to achieve a unique link with the enchanting environment around us”, concluded Fernandez. For further details, see www.bodegajf.es



◆ EU dairy sector under the spotlight

Key actions for a vibrant dairy sector under the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have been agreed by Copa and Cogeca.

This is designed to feed into upcoming EU legislation on this.

Thierry Roquefeuil, Chairman of Copa and Cogeca's Milk Working Party, said "With over 50% of dairy farms located in less favoured areas, the dairy sector plays a crucial role in boosting jobs in rural areas where often no other type of employment can exist".

"Future policy must respond to three challenges: coping with extreme market volatility, ensuring better producer incomes, and having milk production across the EU", explained Roquefeuil.

"The market is quite positive but prices have come down from the historic levels seen last Summer and the situation remains fragile. The large quantities of skimmed milk powder still in public intervention is also putting downward pressure on prices.

De-stocking must be done in the right way to avoid creating another crisis situation Balancing supply and demand must be a priority", stated Roquefeuil.

EU Farm Commissioner Phil Hogan also insisted in February that he was eager to ensure that the selling of current quantities from intervention will not damage the market.

The quantitative limit for buying-in skimmed milk powder at a fixed price is now set at zero in 2018 to prevent this from happening again. This is in line with the EU commitment to make sure that the safety net is used in a prudent manner, not just to react to market disruptions, and to avoid them from emerging in the first place whenever possible, Rumen Porodzanov, Bulgarian Minister of Agriculture, told Ministers. Looking at the Commission's Communication on the Future of Food and Farming, Mr Roquefeuil said "It is good news that measures to manage the market like public intervention and private storage aid will be kept. Without these tools, prices would have been much lower in 2016. They are vital to prevent the market from collapsing.

Temporary milk reduction schemes are also important here".

"We welcome the fact that direct payments to dairy farmers will continue as they play a vital role in stabilising dairy producers incomes", added Roquefeuil.

"We are looking at further developing futures markets and hedging tools in the dairy sector to better equip producers to face risks.

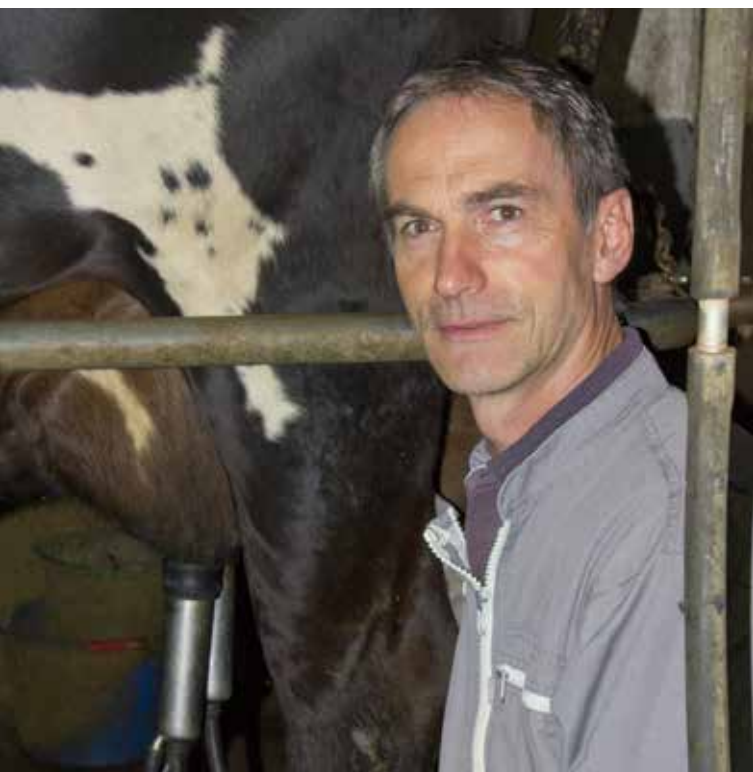
They are already well developed in the cereals sector. More focus on risk management measures in the Communication is a positive step and we will see how this pans out", said Roquefeuil. It is important that they remain in the second pillar of the CAP and are voluntary for producers to apply.

"Financial tools need to be developed, with the help of the European Investment Bank (EIB), for producers who make investments in order to protect their capital when markets are volatile. Export credit guarantees need to be available too to help producers export in risky markets", added Roquefeuil .

"The European Milk Market Observatory is a welcome move too as it provides farmers with the market data which they can use when making their business decisions. More timely data would be needed though", stated Roquefeuil.

Dairy cooperatives also play a vital role in reducing volatility for their farmer members and it's important to encourage their development. They play an important role too in precision livestock farming and in optimising production costs as well as in processing and collecting supplies.

"Finally, we need to work hard on combating unfair trading practices in the food chain so that farmers can get a better share of the price paid by consumers for their produce. It will also be important to conquer new markets ", concluded Roquefeuil.



*Providing farmers with optimal solutions
to continue meeting Europe's food needs!*

European Fertilizers for European farmers

Delivering best crop nutrition

Improving environmental performance

Increasing yield productivity

Ensuring food safety



Tobacco growing crucial source of jobs for Europe's rural areas



With the European tobacco sector representing a vital source of income and jobs for 350 000 workers concentrated mainly in southern Member States, it is important to maintain support for the sector in the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Tobacco farming is very labour intensive and production is often located in Europe's most disadvantaged regions where there are currently no viable alternatives to tobacco cultivation.

“Apart from providing jobs for 65, 000 tobacco leaf producers, it provides a good source of employment for women. The tobacco sector plays a key role in creating growth and jobs. This is also a top political priority of the European Commission's work programme », . explained Chairman of Copa and Cogeca's Tobacco Working Party Teofilo Moreno.

“We consequently cannot accept any budget cuts for our growers which would risk threatening these fragile rural areas.

Neither do we accept any co-funding of payments in the first pillar of the CAP. We need common rules across the EU”, added Teofilo Moreno.

Support ?

He underlined the importance for producers to have access on a voluntary basis to payments which are coupled to production under the future CAP in order to ensure the stability of their incomes in the face of market volatility. Farmers also need to be granted access to forms of income insurance, for example, by creating sector-specific collective investment funds managed by farmers.

« Another priority is to improve the functioning of the market and to support European inter-branch organisations and the creation and operation of them. Full traceability, starting with seeds, will help to stabilise the market too », added Teofilo Moreno.

“Whilst measures to help farmers better manage risk need to be available on a voluntary basis. Moreover, a permanent European market observatory should be set up to monitor developments in production, imports and exports, like in other agricultural sectors.

● Environmental measures?

Agri-environmental payments need to be kept. It is important to create incentives and offer support for using more environmentally-friendly agricultural practices, for example, limiting the use of phytosanitary products, improving the use of water, increasing the use of renewable energy, guaranteeing soil protection and helping maintain biodiversity, concluded the Chairman.



Our stewardship

Promoting the safe and sustainable use of pesticides is an industry priority.

In 2017 we began reshaping our stewardship programme, in response to an in-depth review of the impact and effectiveness of our projects, and reaffirming crop protection industry commitment to tackle global challenges and contribute towards the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*.



INSPIA – Initiative for Sustainable Productive Agriculture

Improving the socio-economic and environmental performance of agriculture is an essential contribution to the SDGs. Working with farmers on more than 50 farms representative of important crops and biogeographic regions, **INSPIA promotes agricultural management practices that - including crop protection - deliver high productivity, environmental protection, and improved resource efficiency.**

Safe and Sustainable Use Initiative

With a focus on the health of operators and bystanders, the Safe and Sustainable Use Initiative (SUI) delivers awareness raising campaigns on the safe storage, handling, and application of pesticides. **Recognised for its contribution to the safe use of pesticides by governments and authorities across Europe, the SUI trains around 5,000 farmers every year.**



TOPPS Water Protection

Making a difference in the field, **TOPPS Water Protection encourages the uptake of a range of best management practices that help keep pesticides out of surface and ground water.** With training and awareness raising for the prevention of point-source and spray-drift pollution, this well-established stewardship initiative has engaged tens-of-thousands of farmers across Europe.



Container Management Systems

Contributing to the protection of human health, a safer and cleaner environment and circular economy, **the Container Management Systems (CMS) sees the cleaning, collection, and recycling or disposal of empty plastic pesticide containers.** The initiative aims to deliver independent Container Management Systems across Europe. In these member countries more than 50% of containers are collected through Container Management Schemes. By 2020, ECPA aims to take the collection rate above 75%.



Against Counterfeit and Illegal Pesticides

ECPA works with authorities and supports communication activities to raise awareness and help bring an end to the trade in counterfeit and illegal pesticides. **In 2017, we supported Europol's operation Silver Axe that resulted in the discovery and seizure of 122 tons of illegal and counterfeit pesticides.**



* Our stewardship activities make direct contribution to many of the SDGs; here, we make reference to those where the greatest contributions are made.

◆ New innovative varieties and action plans to promote fruit and vegetable consumption presented by agri-cooperatives



European cooperatives showcased their new innovative products and a wide diversity of quality fruit and vegetable produce at the Fruita Logista event in Berlin in February, bringing together 76,000 trade visitors from 130 countries, ranging from importers, exporters, producers, retailers.

● New varieties

Dutch, Spanish, Italian, French, German, cooperatives showcased their latest innovations and new varieties. Varieties from the **Spanish cooperative Anecoop** like the persimon kaki fruit which is only produced in Spain, seedless watermelons were presented as well as new easy ready-made solutions in convenient tubs with minimum processing like courgette soup, fruit salads, vegetable spreads, fruit purees and vegetable snacks were showcased.

“All our members are farmers and there are increasing challenges and pressures on the market. We have to meet high EU traceability, certification standards which imports to the EU from non-EU countries do not have to meet.

We consequently devote a lot of time to developing new varieties and adding value to produce to get a good return from the market for our farmer members to help protect their incomes”, explained the spokeswoman for Anecoop. www.Anecoop.com

Whilst **Melinda** – a large consortium of 16 Italian agricultural cooperatives – bringing together over 4000 small scale farmers and covering around 6,500 hectares of apple orchards displayed their range of quality apples at the event. Golden Delicious which are grown in the alpine environment of Trentino’s Val di Non and Val di Sole for centuries and which were awarded Protected Origin status (PDO) account for 70% of the total. More details can be found at www.melinda.it

The Dutch potato cooperative **Agrico** also presented the next generation of potatoes like Carolus which is blight resistant and which took 30 years to develop at the high-level event. Years of natural crossing and selection yielded this special organic variety for a sustainable future worldwide. For details, see www.agrico.nl

- **Not eating enough fruit and vegetables?**

With many citizens not consuming the recommended daily amount of fruit and vegetables, Copa and Cogeca presented its joint initiative with the European fruit and vegetable association Freshfel #FruitVeg4You at the event. The campaign aims to raise awareness and to promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables.

A Dutch action plan, initiated by the Dutch Produce Association and the Dutch government in collaboration with top Dutch chef Rudolf Van Veen, was also showcased to boost fruit and vegetable consumption. "Diseases are on the rise and Dutch consumers are not eating enough fruit and vegetables a day", a spokesman warned. The FAO recommends five servings of fruit and vegetables a day or 400 g for a well-balanced diet, to help prevent nutrient deficiency disorders, cardiovascular diseases and many cancers. The campaign consequently focuses on choosing a different fruit and vegetable colour each day to maximize the nutrients of each vegetable in a consumers daily diet. Blueberries for example are rich in anti-oxidants, the spokesman explained.





◆ Trade deal between EU and Mexico sends positive signal

The trade agreement struck between the EU and Mexico has sent a positive message internationally, showing that the EU can reach good balanced trade deals.

“In less than two years, the EU and Mexico have delivered a deal fit for the economic and political challenges of the 21st century”, EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström declared in April after the agreement.

Whilst Commissioner for Agriculture, Phil Hogan, said “This deal is very positive for our agri-food sector, creating new export opportunities for our high-quality food and drink products, which in turn will create support more jobs and growth, particularly in rural areas.” “It sends a signal to American President Trump that good trade agreements can be made”, added Hogan.

“It shows that the EU and Mexico can continue walking together in the same direction”, stressed Chairman of European Parliaments International Trade Committee German MEP Bernd Lange.

● What is included in the deal?

The new agreement, which follows a positive deal struck with Japan last year, will mean that 99% of products would be traded between the EU and Mexico duty free. In particular, it will allow the EU to substantially increase its pork exports to Mexico, with duty-free trade for virtually all pork products. Preferential access to the Mexican market for many quality cheeses like Roquefort and gorgonzola has also been secured with tariff cuts of up to 20%. A tariff rate quota of 20,000 tonnes in five years for mature cheeses and 5000 t in 5 years for fresh cheeses is included in the deal. Wine will also be easier to trade.

Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo was pleased with the deal which will reduce his country's dependence on the USA market and give Mexico better access for some meats, bananas, ethanol, sugar, orange juice, honey, egg whites.

● How do EU farmers and cooperatives view it?

It was seen fairly positively by Copa and Cogeca. “We believe that this agreement with Mexico can deliver for both sides provided that the import quotas are managed properly.

We welcome in particular the increased access to the Mexican market for our quality cheeses, skimmed milk powder, pork, olive oil and wine under this agreement.

It is vital to ensure small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) gain market access, especially cooperatives. Red tape in Mexico must be minimized to lower the threshold for SMEs to enter the Mexican market”, Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said.





But he regretted that increased access for Mexican beef to the EU market has been negotiated, saying that “an import quota of 10, 000 tonnes of beef is 10, 000 t too much”.

This is in addition to the increased market access for beef being negotiated in the trade talks with the Latin American trade bloc Mercosur.

Studies show that the EU is already 102% self-sufficient in beef production and that the cumulative impact of trade deals being negotiated with non-EU countries combined with the potential impact of Brexit would cause the market to be oversupplied and beef prices to plummet by 16%, putting at risk growth and jobs in rural areas .

He also regretted that that the EU has agreed to fully liberalise imports of orange juice from Mexico which will hit Spanish producers particularly hard. This comes on top of the EU move to fully liberalise imports of orange juice in its offer to Mercosur.

It is disappointing too that it will take 10 years to fully liberalise exports of apples, added Pesonen.

Copa and Cogeca will remain vigilant on the higher market access for beef, orange juice, fruit and vegetables especially in view of the cumulative impact it can have on these sectors.

● Protected origin status?

He also welcomed the fact that Mexico has agreed to recognise the EU's quality and production standards like Geographical Indications (GIs) which protect the EU's quality produce from imitations. As many as 340 EU products will be protected under the deal.

But it is disappointing that the world famous Spanish cheese manchego made from ewes milk from the Spanish region La Mancha - protected in the EU since 1982 - will not receive full protection in Mexico. Mexican producers will still be able to produce it using cow's milk in their country, allowing both types of cheese to have the same name in Mexico.

A move which is set to be contested by the Spanish farm unions and cooperatives who view it as utter nonsense and believe that Mexican cheeses should stop carrying the same name for what is essentially a different product.

Next steps

The trade deal must now be translated into legal texts, translated and officially approved by European Council and Parliament.

► Re-conquering young generation of consumers and producers vital for a dynamic EU sheep sector

With lamb consumption falling by 1% a year in France, it's important to re-conquer the young generation of consumers and get young farmers back working in the sector, French sheep farmer and Chairwoman of Copa and Cogecas' sheepmeat working party Michèle Boudoin said.

Sheep play an important role in the economies of rural areas, with 70% of areas facing natural handicaps grazed by sheep in the EU, often where no other type of employment can exist. With prices less than those seen in previous years, incomes remain fragile. **"We need to arrive at the point where we get more money back into farmers pockets, where the market is more balanced and where consumers see the added value of consuming our quality lamb produce", stressed Boudoin.** "We need to make the sector more dynamic and more attractive to young people once more", she added.

● National lamb day in schools

As President of the French Sheep Producers Organisation, she has just announced plans to have a national lamb day in schools in France to re-educate young consumers about the many nutritional benefits of eating lamb and also to promote new modern recipes. Lamb is a very important source of minerals and vitamins like B6 and B12 in a consumers diet and they need to be aware of this.

She welcomed the Commissions' move to step up promotion measures for the sector. There are several campaigns to promote lamb at the moment – one of these campaigns is the Tasty East Fun Lamb campaign - which is a joint campaign with produce from France, the UK and Ireland.

● Trade

Ms Boudoin underlined the need to look at having a trade policy which deals with the issue of seasonality of production, to ensure the market is not flooded with imports at certain times of the year. In view of the upcoming exit of the UK from the EU, she warned that the UK quota concerning New Zealand lamb imports to the EU must be renegotiated and must go when the UK exits from the EU.

● Strong CAP support

Finally, she underlined that strong support via the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) remains essential to help stabilize farmers' incomes. "We need at least to maintain the voluntary coupled aid for sheep and goat farmers and to extend the agri-environmental payments to pastures used for sheep and goat grazing", added Boudoin. "In view of this, the EU must ensure that CAP spending in the future EU budget is at least maintained", she said.

● European Parliament

MEPs have also issued a report strongly supporting the sector and underlined the benefits of sheep farming for maintaining biodiversity and the need to reward sheep farming in areas facing natural constraints.



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◆ EU plan to ensure more fairness in food chain and to crack down on bad practices seen as good step forward

#fairfoodchain

Plans issued by the EU Commission in April to crack down on unfair trading practices (UTPs) in the food chain such as late payments and last minute contract changes have been hailed as a break through by many across the EU.

The plans were presented to MEPs and EU Farm Ministers in April who saw the proposal as an “historic step”.

“We have been battling for this since 2007. Farmer’s incomes are today 40% of average earnings and have fallen by 20% in the past four years. This proposal is a first step in the right direction”, said Joe Healy President of the Irish Farmers Union and Chairman of Copa and Cogeca Food Chain working party.

“Eurostat shows that a breakdown of the share of the value of the agricultural product means that farmers receive on average 21% of the share of it whilst 28% goes to processors and 51% to retailers. Less young people are entering the industry. I hope that this proposal will ensure a fairer share of the consumer euro”, Healy added.

“Legislation already exists in 20 Member States but it needs to be backed up by EU legislation to ensure a level playing field as well as to address transnational Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs) that could otherwise be left unchallenged. We need strong enforcement

all businesses are covered by it. I hope that Parliament will strengthen it when they discuss it in the months ahead.

Without farmers confidence in the system, it will not work. We have seen great work in the UK with the UK Groceries



led by an independent authority able to initiate and conduct investigations and apply deterrent sanctions in case of non-compliance”, he underlined.

“We also need to increase the scope of this proposed Directive and ensure that

Code Adjudicator and in Spain to tackle this problem and I hope that this can be continued across the EU”, he insisted.

“This is as important as Brexit and the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)”, added Healy.

● What is the aim of the proposal?

The Commission proposal aims to improve the role of farmers in the wider food supply chain by banning some of the most common UTPs that they face. These include late payments for perishable food products, last minute order cancellations, unilateral or retroactive changes to contracts. In addition, the European Commission proposes that each EU member state designate a competent authority to enforce the new rules, and sets out the minimum enforcement powers of such authorities. "We are looking to eliminate the "fear factor" in the food supply chain, through a confidential complaints procedure," EU Farm Commissioner Hogan said. This is a clear statement for more fair business conduct, added Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen. Member States can also take further measures as they see fit.

● MEPs hail it as an historic step

European Parliaments Agriculture Committee hailed the proposal as an "historic step" in April but warned that it can still be improved. Irish MEP Luke Flanagan said "It is definitely a good start. Farmers need a price that will give them an incentive to produce". He compared the situation to David vs Goliath and hoped that the new law will put a little stone into David's hand to sling at Goliath. But he acknowledged that the "devil is in the detail".

Whilst Italian MEP Paolo de Castro, draftsman of Parliaments report on the proposal, described it as "a very positive" proposal and believes that excellent work can be done on this to ensure more fairness in the food chain

● EU Agriculture Ministers reaction?

The plans received almost unanimous support from EU Agriculture Ministers who said it is a good basis to work on and goes in the right direction as voluntary initiatives alone do not work.

● Industry reactions

Copa and Cogeca sent out a joint statement with AIM, CEJA, Clitravi, EFFAT, FTAO, FoodDrinkEurope, IFOAM and UEAPME underlining that the proposal is a step forward.

"It is farmers that do a huge amount of the work for only 21% of the final price. Farmers need a fair share of the value of their produce", Healy concluded.



◆ Copa and Cogeca hold high-level CAP event with MEP Paolo de Castro: Food is life...Life is people



Copa and Cogeca and MEP Paolo de Castro held an event in European Parliament this February to experience the food and people of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The event which was attended by over 200 people included a display of photos and underlined the importance of "Feeding Europe".

Through the CAP, sustainable, affordable food supplies for European consumers and a decent standard of living for farmers are ensured at less than 1% of EU governments total expenditure.

● Resilience

Faced with increasing market volatility and natural disasters, the CAP helps farmers, foresters and their cooperatives to plan ahead and to be resilient in times of crises. Schemes are available under EU rural development policy to better equip farmers against risks. Did you know that the EU suffered one of the lowest wine harvests in 2017 due to extreme weather events? The income stabilization tool under the CAP plays a vital role to compensate them for losses. EU quality and promotion

schemes also help farmers and cooperatives to add value to their produce in a competitive marketplace. Did you know that there are over 3,300 agriculture quality products covered by EU legislation on geographical indications to protect them from imitations and to promote them in the international arena?

● Innovation

The EU agriculture and forestry sectors, supported by the CAP, are also a key driver for innovation, trade, environmental, social and economic sustainability. Did you know that world food demand is expected to grow by 60% by 2050 and that the EU needs to be able to meet this demand by producing more using less resources? Precision agriculture enables farmers to produce saving up to 30% on fertilizer costs. To do this, they need access to high-speed broad band to benefit from new technologies and to have more farmer-led research. Demand-driven research and innovation, training and advisory services, financial support to invest in new technologies are crucial.

● Community

Farmers and their cooperatives are the backbone of rural areas, providing growth and jobs and ensuring vibrant rural areas. Over 22 million people work on farms and 22,000 people are employed in agri-cooperatives. Agri-tourism is also flourishing, thanks to rural development policy, with farming providing an attractive countryside for visitors. Did you know that farmers and foresters look after ¾ of the European territory? The CAP helps them to do this in a sustainable way. But only 6% of young farmers in the EU are aged under 35 years. To encourage young farmers to join, infrastructures in rural areas must be improved.



● Family

The CAP helps to support family farms produce and to provide employment in rural areas where no other source of employment can exist. Over 50% of dairy farms are located in less-favoured areas in the EU. Did you know that approximately 90% of farmers in the EU consist of family farms? 70% of Danish farmers also said in a survey that the worst thing about being a farmer is bureaucracy. To continue, they need a strong CAP to support them, with simple and common rules across the EU.

● Health

European quality agriculture produce provides consumers with a multitude of vitamins and nutrients to keep them healthy. Did you know that life expectancy in the EU has risen by over fifteen years in Southern Europe and by other 9 years in Northern Europe since 1950 to an average of 79.6 years for both male (76.6) and females (82.4) in 2015?

● Caring

Farmers care for the food they produce. Farmers and foresters care for the environment. Farmers care for the animals they rear. Farmers care for the seeds they sow. Did you know that European farmers and their cooperatives respect some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world? The EU also has the highest compliance costs making up between 5 and 10% of production costs. A cost that the whole value chain needs to share.



► **European Innovation Award for Women Farmers launched**

The European Farmers Organisation Copa have received a great number of applications from European women farmers for the 2018 European Innovation Award. Chairwoman of Copa's Women's Working Party Lotta Folkesson said "The theme of this year's innovation award for women farmers is "Innovative solutions for farming sustainability". Women farmers are drivers of innovation and represent 42% of the EU's agricultural workforce, with 30% of them farm managers. They contribute to a more economic, environmental and socially sustainable farm sector and to viable rural areas by implementing innovative solutions. They promote agriculture and forestry sectors that are able to adapt to challenges and that benefit from various opportunities. This Award aims to highlight the innovative activities and projects carried out by women involved in farming and forestry throughout the EU". The Award Ceremony takes place during the week 15th -19th October 2018 in Brussels, during celebrations for the International Day of Rural Women. Come and join us.

► **Copa and Cogeca urge EU to support Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisations such as cooperatives in future regime**

Copa and Cogeca have agreed on a reflections paper on the future of the EU fruit and vegetable regime, calling on the EU to continue focusing specific support on developing Producer Organisations (POs) such as cooperatives in the EU fruit and vegetables sector. Chairman of Copa & Cogeca Fruit and Vegetable Working Party Philippe Appeltans said "The specific support scheme for producer organisations in this sector is an efficient and modern tool to help improve the functioning of the food supply chain and to combat unfair trading practices. Moreover, producers who join cooperatives are more resilient to market crises". Copa and Cogeca consequently urge the EU keep the specific definition and regime for fruit and vegetable producer organisations in the future CAP and to prolong the support scheme for this sector as it's an efficient tool to help producers remain viable", he concluded. The move comes to feed into the debate on the future CAP.

► **Bayer presents sustainable farming initiative**

With the world population expected to grow by 3 billion by 2050 and resources scarce, a representative from Bayer presented at the Fruit Logistica event in Berlin their forward farm initiative to help farmers produce sustainably and innovatively using pilot projects and training farmers on optimizing yields, irrigation, machinery in Europe. Model representative farms have been introduced in countries like Belgium and the Netherlands - forwardfarming projects -which act as a platform to share and exchange knowledge and better understand how best to promote biodiversity, optimize inputs, optimize sprays using innovative techniques with farmers who are willing to share their farms. The farm is used as a hub for the exchange of ideas and insights that can be implemented both locally and globally. "We work with farmers to find solutions. The aim is to make it farmer led so that farmers have tools that they really need and that are easy to use", said the spokesman. www.bayer.com www.ForwardFarming.com

► **EU roadmap updating the EU Bioeconomy Strategy welcome news**

The EU Commission has published a Roadmap on the Revision of the Bioeconomy which has received a positive response across the EU. "We welcome the fact that this aims to strengthen sustainability and deliver on jobs and growth as well as support valorization of local resources and involve more effectively primary producers in the supply chain. It promotes also more policy coherence", said Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen. A stronger link between the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the bioeconomy is in everyone's interests. It is good news that the Commission has prioritized the bioeconomy in its plans on the Future of Food and Farming. The future action plan for the Strategy should highlight the importance of the future CAP in supporting the further development of the bioeconomy. This could be by providing the right tools to promote active land management, prevent land abandonment, support investments to foster innovation and to stimulate precision farming and forestry for a more efficient use of resources.

In addition, the farming sector needs advisory services, knowledge transfer and training adapted to its needs to maximise the potential. Producer organisations such as cooperatives play an important role in further developing the bioeconomy. Their role should be enhanced to continue to create added value for farmers.

► **Granting patent on melon works against principles patent law**

The European Patent Office (EPO) is continuing to grant patents on seeds even though the move will significantly cut the number of varieties available on the market, creating a disaster for farmers and small breeders alike. Melon (EP 2455475) by the Dutch company ENZA Zaden is the latest product to be granted a patent by the EPO for its increased resistance to downy mildew. This follows on from six other patents on grapes, cucumber, soybeans, onions, tomatoes and potatoes all of which are based on conventional breeding techniques, using more or less the same mutations, which cannot be regarded as an “invention” since the DNA remains a product of nature. The EPO is ignoring latest advice made by the European Commission which recommends not using patents on plants whose DNA belongs to nature and cannot be patented. “We have to stop the process now and withdraw the patents which have been granted. The EPO is not listening to us. We have the best innovative plant breeding sector in the world. The Community Plant Variety Right (CPVR) system has worked well for 50 years, creating a good climate for breeding. It gives farmers access to an excellent and diverse range of plant varieties. Breeders in Europe currently make around 2000 varieties a year which shows how well the system works. Without this system, 90% of the varieties would disappear in the next 10 years to the economic benefit of a few multinationals”, warned Chairman of Copa and Cogeca’s Seed Working Party Thor Kofoed.

► **Copa and Cogeca ready to work on implementing EU Organic Farming Review**

After European Parliament’s approval of the political agreement on the EU organic farming review, Copa and Cogeca are ready to work on effective implementing rules to ensure a smooth

transition and harmonised implementation of organic technical rules. “The market for organic produce in the EU has grown rapidly by 48% in the last 4 years and it is now worth around €30 billion a year. This trend is down to the increased consumer demand”, said Chairman of Copa & Cogeca’s Organic Working Party Kees Van Zelderren. “Despite this expansion, only 7 % of total EU agricultural area is used for organic cultivation. The difference between EU demand and production is covered by growing imports. We therefore want to ensure that future legislation on organic farming will help to encourage more farmers to grow organic, whilst maintaining consumer trust by keeping up the tight controls”, Van Zelderren stressed. In particular, Copa and Cogeca believe that with good cooperation with the EU institutions, implementing rules and delegated acts can be adopted that will ensure further development of the EU organic sector. The positive rules that have been kept in the future legislation will also ensure the growth of the sector. Mixed farms, for example, guarantee that new entrants can progressively convert into organic farming and it is good that this possibility has been maintained. In the new legislation, the simplified group certification scheme for small farmers will also help them convert into organic farming. In addition, producers from non-EU countries who want to sell their products in the EU will have to comply with the same rules if there is no equivalence agreement between the EU and non-EU countries and this will ensure fairer competition for EU producers.

► **European farmers and cooperatives open their doors to the public in 2018**

Many of Copa and Cogeca’s members run their own national farm open days, bringing consumers back in touch with nature, farming and food. The initiative enables consumers, especially the young, to gain more familiarity with farms, farm schools, delicious recipes, cooking and education on farms, promoting healthy eating, good farming and welfare practices and rural tourism. It brings consumers closer to nature and shows the benefit to society at large of farmers and farmers cooperatives in preserving the countryside. Come and join us !

► **Timetable for National Open Farm Days & Cooperative Open Days 2018:**

May 4/5 2018

Latvian Countryside Open Day with farmers and cooperatives opening doors to the public
<http://www.celotajs.lv/en/news/list/p?lang=en>

May 16 2018

Portuguese Days of Agriculture in Schools (CAP)
www.cap.pt https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kAsCpCNJ_U#action=share

May 11/21 2018

Dutch Dairy Farm Open Days
www.campina.nl

May 28 2018

FNSEA French Farm Open Days:
www.fnsea.fr

June 1-10 2018

Third edition of Agricultural Cooperative Week in France open to the public:
www.coopdefrance.coop

June 9-10 2018

DBV German Farm Open Days: <http://www.bauernverband.de>

June 10 2018

Open Farm Sunday (England, Scotland & Wales):
www.nfu.co.uk

June 16/17 2018

Farm Open Day, Northern Ireland: www.leafuk.org;
www.farmsunday.org ; www.nfuonline.com

June 23/4 2018

Wallonian Farm Open Day (FWA): www.fwa.be

July 22 2018

Estonian FarmOpenDay
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1753794027964630/>

September 16 2018

Farm open days in Flanders, Belgium by Boerenbond & Denmark (DAFC) are traditionally organized on the third Sunday of September and this year on the 16th of September:
www.boerenbond.be ; www.agricultureandfood.dk

► **Next Congress of European Farmers 2018 in Austria**

Together with the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture LKO, Copa and Cogeca will hold the next Congress of European Farmers 2018 in the beautiful area of Linz in Austria at the Austrian Design Centre on October 10th to 12th to debate the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), enjoy farm visits and networking along the river Danube. Come and join us at the Congress and experience some great agriculture produce and regional specialities.

◆ Copa and Cogeca survey reveals farmers worried about future agriculture prospects

Results from Copa and Cogecas' survey at the end of 2017 shows that farmers are concerned about their future economic prospects, mainly as a result of global market developments and trade.

Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said "Although farmers in 7 out of 10 Member States were more positive about their economic situation in 2017, mainly as a result of better prices for some commodities, especially dairy, the survey reveals that many farmers have serious concerns about future prospects".

This is fueled by uncertainty about global agricultural markets and also trade, especially Brexit. Farmers are worried about the negative economic impact Brexit could have on key economic factors like demand, investment, the exchange rate and ultimately producer prices, the survey shows. Irish exports to the UK, for example, already dipped by as much as 570 meuros in 2016 due to the weakness of sterling after the UK voted to leave the EU. UK farmers are also affected by the uncertainty caused by Brexit in the future. This is having a serious impact on farmers livelihoods.

"Many farmers are also still facing difficulties with Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) implementation and red tape under the CAP. The recent weather events that affected some production sectors last year, especially the arable crops and wine sectors, was also a cause for concern", Pesonen added.

The Copa and Cogeca confidence index is calculated twice yearly on the basis of the results of national survey carried out amongst over 8 000 farmers. Ten Member States participate in the survey - Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden, UK.

Click here to read the report:
<http://www.copa-cogeca.eu/Download.ashx?ID=1769067>



Ups and downs



- ↑ **#Fairfoodchain: EU Commission proposed EU legislation to combat Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs) in food chain**
- ↑ **Simplification of future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**
- ↑ **EU organic farming review**



- ↓ **EU Budget 2021-2027: unacceptable to cut EU agriculture expenditure**
- ↓ **EU prices for many agriculture commodities and farm incomes declining: farmers suffering cost-price squeeze**
- ↓ **Trade liberalising talks between EU and Latin American trade bloc Mercosur: serious concerns over inclusion of beef, sugar, rice, poultry, ethanol, fruit and vegetables, orange juice in EU market access offer**
- ↓ **EU decision to ban use of neonicotinoid seed treatments on all outdoor crops disappointing when no justification for total ban exists**

Research and innovation key to improving farmers' and agri-cooperatives environmental and economic performance



With farmers and their cooperatives facing competing challenges, research and innovation are crucial to give the agriculture sector the right tools to overcome them.

"It enables farmers to produce more efficiently, said Juan Sagarna from the Spanish cooperative

Cooperativas Agro-Alimentarias and Vice Chairman of Copa and Cogeca's Research Working Party.

"We are currently involved in a number of projects under Horizon 2020 with other farming organisations across the EU designed to improve our energy efficiency and encourage the use of renewables. Residues from the agri-food sector, for instance, can be used as biofuels, providing a good example of the circular economy working", added Sagarna.

● Precision agriculture

"Precision agriculture is another priority for us. We are involved in a big research project on digital agriculture. It enables farmers and cooperatives to achieve higher yields, using less resources at the same time", he insisted.

It can also improve the way that water is managed sustainably. Precision spreading and application techniques for example reduce the drift of nutrients or plant protection products (PPPs) into surface water. New breeding

techniques and coated seeds are also important solutions to tackle environmental challenges.

New seed varieties can be developed too which are more resistant to climatic events as a result of research and innovation.

"But to maximize the potential, farmers or their representatives need to be actively involved in research projects right from the beginning.

This is the best way to guarantee that innovations are practicable, easy and fast to use. EU support and training is also important as well as a good broadband infrastructure to enable farmers and their cooperatives to use these new technologies. The future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must guarantee that investment measures in agriculture include support for future and innovative solutions", he concluded.



Access to a wide range of animal medicines can help farmers optimise herd health management, while ensuring more efficient use of natural resource inputs and addressing potential production losses.

Over the past decade, fewer new prevention and treatment options have been made available – or are sometimes not species-adapted - for the many different animals farmed in all parts of Europe. This is mostly due to high costs for licencing such products, linked to increasing data requirements and administrative tasks, lack of harmonisation across Europe, and also due to a lack of predictability if certain products can still be used for treating sick animals in the future.

The forthcoming revised legislation on veterinary medicines can help turn this situation around. By rewarding investments, harmonising processes and with the right people making science-based decisions in the interests of animal health and welfare, the animal medicines industry can respond to farmers' needs for new and improved disease prevention and treatment options.

Simply put, by putting in place legislation that is conducive to innovation, we can invest more in research and development. This would lead to a wider availability of more medicines, for more species, in more countries in Europe, making the farmer's job just that little bit easier.



New name, new logo,
still protecting the health
of Europe's animals

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Our members provide solutions to prevent and treat animal disease. Without them, it would be simply impossible to raise healthy livestock or look after our pets.



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