

**Final minutes - CDG Arable Crops - COP (Cereals, Oil Crops & Protein) & Non Food Crops – 9/9/16**

- 1) Agenda approved
- 2) Chair and vice chairs elected, DG AGRI to put in number of votes, abstentions, against

**Morning Session - COP**

**1) Harvest figures**

- The European Commission presented the update on import and export figures for 2015/16 for major European crops
- The Commission presented the extreme weather events in Europe for summer 2016 and referred to its implications
- The Commission reported the area forecast for 2016.
- Considering the weather events and the area concerned, a 5.1% reduction in production of cereals is expected
- Russian Government reduced the wheat export tax to 0% from mid-September 2016 until 1 July 2018
- Egypt re-instated the 0% tolerance policy on ergot
- The Commission presented price differentials of agricultural commodities and its potential implications on market trade
- PAN Europe - Can we differentiate organic and conventional production?
- COPA - We have anticipated lower yields in June and we expect the crop to be below 295 million tonnes. Weather events have been very tough this year which showed us the need for appropriate tools to mitigate negative weather events. We will have 3rd year in a row a serious cash flow. Harvest from last year and this year shall find markets on the international market. Oilseeds drop was expected since several years and we need to think what will happen to rapeseed next year? Farmers are doubting about rapeseed plantings. Called on the Commission and stakeholders to work on the protein balance sheet again.
- COPA - Italian yields for common and durum wheat do not match the Commission figures, as real yields are higher than presented by the Commission.
- EURAF - Questioned where the data is coming from and asked whether it could be further detailed at regional level.
- COPA - The lack of sunlight in France has affected the yields the most. Support for storage is pleaded for and the group is reminded about this.
- COPA - We are deprived of using some plant products, which inhibit the ability of European farmers to the advantage of 3rd country farmers
- Commission reminded the Group that the statistics are received from Eurostat in cooperation with Member States and the meteorological data from Eurometeo via Eurostat. Therefore the data presented is received from Member States directly and if there is a discrepancy between the presented figures and the real figures, that is due to the delay in MSs transmitting their national data.
- President called on the traders, producers and stakeholders to work on the protein balance sheet, since they have more information on the ground.
- Commission also reminded that providing regional data is not possible due to the structure of statistics collection in place.
- Commission does not have specific information about organic vs. conventional yields, the Commission has a dedicated Unit responsible for organic farming and reminded that their work can be included in the work of CDG
- PAN Europe - We need to understand how oilseeds are produced in Europe, including minor oilseeds
- COPA - Indeed organic production information is important and needs to be looked into it. Danube region needs special attention from the Commission and perhaps support to infrastructure

- CELCAA - We need to look at the worldwide situation as well, whereas there is a big harvest worldwide, despite the opposite trend in Europe. Record harvest in Australia. Quality of wheat is a constant problem and concern, the risk of cultivating durum wheat is not proportionally remunerated. Perhaps at the EU level we can have a balance, the poor quality in the west balanced with the excess quantities in the east.

## 2) Review of the Fertiliser Regulation

- Proposal adopted on 17 March, now discussed at the Council and will be passed on the Parliament in the future
- Commission presented the rationale behind revising the Fertilisers Regulation, reminding that there is a fragmented market for organic fertilisers which put them at a competitive disadvantage vis-a-vis inorganic fertilisers.
- The vision of the Commission is to make fertilisers more sustainable, include safety registration (REACH, limits for contaminants, recovery rules, etc.) and promote recycling of nutrients vs. energy or resource-intensive products. Boost the market for secondary raw materials as well as to stimulate new value chains (in line with the EU Circular Economy Package).
- Expected consequences of the proposal include: Products derived from animal by-products and reaching the to be defined end-points will leave ABPR controls, products derived from waste might leave waste controls if they are fulfilling recovery rules defined in the Fertilisers proposal. , Therefore processed animal by-products can be recognised as safe and would be easier to transfer from one to another part of the EU. Use of fertiliser is not regulated, this remains at the level of MSs and Nitrate Directive remains applicable.
- The next discussion with the Council WP will take place on 20 and 21 September.
- Fertilisers Europe - In agreement with the European Commission proposal, however disagrees with the recycling provisions and asks for strict quality criteria, such as heavy metals.
- Bee Life - We need to prevent bee mortality linked with the used of manure collected in stables where insecticides have been applied.
- COPA - There should be adequate time given to the industry to adapt to the proposal and its limits, JRC should look into the limits and the feasibility
- PAN Europe - Does the European Commission intend to support organic fertiliser?
- EURAF - Farmers need to be given the availability numbers. Will organic contaminants be taken into consideration?
- ECVC - Biodynamic agriculture is reviving, is it taken under the scope of this Regulation?
- The European Commission pointed to the provisions of the biocide regulation where authorization procedure of these insecticides shall take toxicity to bees into consideration. Type of nitrogen forms and phosphate forms are mentioned in the Regulation where relevant. The product on biodynamic agriculture will be covered.
- The president reminded participants to contact Mr. Liegeois in case of questions on the proposal

## 3) Mutual funds as agronomical tool beneficial for farmers and environment

- Mr. Furlan presented Integrated Pest Management as the key tool

## 4) Neonics and impacts

- The European Commission presented the situation regarding neonicotinoids. EFSA is currently working on the data collected in the meantime to meet the January 2017 deadline, however, the Commission has doubts whether EFSA can realistically meet the deadline considering the amount of data collected.
- Renewal of different active substances are ongoing and are subject to a different deadline.
- Bee Life - What is the impact of ban on neonics in France?
- The Commission has a recent communication from the French Ministry about the suspension. The Permanent Committee will assess the letter at its next meeting in October

## 5) Genetic Engineering in Plants and the “New Breeding Techniques (NBTs)” - Inherent Risks and the need to regulate

- Dr. Steinbrecher presented her views on genome editing and drew parallels with NPBTs
- Commission informed the participants that there are no clear timetable for the NPBTs

### **Afternoon Session - Non-food Crops**

#### **1) iLUC & Decarbonisation of Transport**

- DG Energy presented the EU policy on promotion of renewable energy in transport, focusing on the recently published iLUC modelling, also known as the GLOBIOM.
- The Commission is carrying out a study with Ecofys and Wageningen University on low iLUC biofuels
- Commission informed the participants that RED II package may be ready by the end of December 2016 and that it is not sure that FQD will be merged with RED in this new version which will address more solid biomass used for energy production
- The Commission also presented the Communication of the Commission on the decarbonisation of transport and the rationale behind it.
- COPA - What measures is the Commission taking to curb iLUC? The Commission is also reminded that the EU biofuels are grown on the set-aside land, which was taken out of food production, therefore the referral to biofuels as food-based biofuels is wrong.
- IFOAM - Does the Commission intend to put a cap on the use of biomass for non-food purposes?

#### **3) LULUCF**

- DG CLIMA presented the proposals for the land use and forestry sector (LULUCF, covering CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and removals), and the Effort Sharing Regulation (which includes non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from agriculture) in the climate and energy framework for 2021-2030.
- The Commission was asked whether the right accounting methods have been identified and whether the agriculture sector has been properly accounted for? The Commission explained that the accounting method proposed is that already in use at the international level for reporting under the Kyoto Protocol. New elements, such as an updated base period for some LULUCF activities and flexibilities with the Effort Sharing Decision, have been proposed to increase the accuracy of the accounting for agricultural land, and to provide incentives for additional mitigation action in the land use sector.
- The Commission highlighted that climate smart agriculture is increasingly taken up and implemented at the international level. Over 100 countries have included climate mitigation commitments related to agriculture and land use in the Paris Agreement. The EU is committed to undertake the necessary efforts to achieve these goals.

#### **4) Outcome of the two public consultations regarding RED II and Sustainability of Solid Biomass**

- DG AGRI presented the main findings of the consultation results, these will be further published and reflected on with the impact assessments.

#### *Disclaimer*

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