



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate G. Economic analyses and evaluation

**G.4. Evaluation of measures applicable to agriculture; studies**

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G/A23/DT5/ PPE quality assessment note

### EVALUATION OF THE CMOs FOR PIG MEAT, POULTRY MEAT AND EGGS

**Subject: Quality grid for the Final Report submitted by Agra CEAS on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2005**

#### PRELIMINARY REMARK

This quality grid provides a global assessment on the above-mentioned evaluation study. The Commission steering group in charge prepared it at the end of the evaluation process.

If the report is to be published on the Internet, the present grid, with the comments of the steering group, will complement the final report.

The judgement is made on the methodological approach followed to answer the evaluation questions, not on the results, conclusions or recommendations reached by the contractor. It has to be pointed out that it is neither the opinion of the evaluators nor the content of their conclusions that are judged here, but only the methods used for obtaining them.

#### ASSESSMENT OF THE REPORT AS A WHOLE

Taking into consideration all the aspects discussed above, the overall judgement of this evaluation report is: **poor**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The judgement of the report as being poor is understood by the steering group as not drawing into question compliance with the contract, while indicating significant weaknesses in the report

1. **Meeting the needs:** Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?

All the evaluation questions of the terms of reference have been addressed and all the themes have been covered, that does not prejudice the quality of the answers provided, which is discussed in the following sub-points.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**.

2. **Relevant scope:** Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?

According to the steering group, the rationale of the policy, its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts, and especially the unexpected consequences were only partially examined. This is due to low efforts to deepen the study.

Global assessment: **poor**.

3. **Defensible design:** Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions?

As regards the first evaluation theme on *Market equilibrium and price stability*, the methodology used was mainly based on a model that does not differentiate between the different sub-products by sector (for pig meat, poultry meat and eggs). It was deemed as a strong limitation by the steering group since the markets are considered much differentiated in these sectors. Furthermore some doubts were expressed by the steering group as regards the data used in the model (for example on import volumes for the period 1995/1997 and 2000/2002), which are sometimes very far from other statistics sources (for example DG AGRI). For the purpose of the model, it was necessary to calculate a “theoretical average import duty” by sector, which was a strong practical difficulty and was considered as unrealistic and inappropriate by the steering group.

The requirement to supplement the use of model and interviews by a description and an analysis of the historical functioning of the policy instruments, literature research and statistical analyses has been fulfilled to a limited extent. By limited extent, it is meant that the contractor does not fully use the lessons learnt from the analysis of the historical functioning of the policy instruments and the literature research in the conclusions of the answers.

Finally, the efforts to overcome the limitations of the model have been inadequate, and, as a consequence, the quality of the answers provided is limited.

Global assessment: **poor**.

4. **Reliable data:** To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?

Concerning the primary data for the theme 1 *Market equilibrium and price stability*, the reliability of the data used for the model was already discussed in the previous point.

For evaluation question 7 *Income level and development*, 8 *Analysis of production costs* (theme 2 *Producers' income*) and 9 *Impacts on rural development and the environment* (theme 3 *Rural development and Environment*), the use of the FADN (Farm Accountancy Data Network) data was judged adequate and reliable.

As regards the secondary data, despite the substantial and relevant list of references presented in the bibliography appendix, only very few of them are quoted into the core text.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**.

5. **Sound analysis:** Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way?

For theme 2 *Producers' income* and some parts of theme 3 *Rural development and Environment*, the final report of Agra CEAS uses the data analyses carried out by the expert team of the FADN (Farm Accountancy Data Network) unit. But the efforts of the consultant to complement by other inputs and to deepen the analysis were limited.

Concerning the theme 1 *Market equilibrium and price stability*, the analysis was initially mainly based on the model that was already discussed in the point 3 and the stakeholders' interviews to confirm the findings of the model. It was complemented by a description and an analysis of the historical functioning of the policy instruments, a literature survey and statistical analyses. But it was often not fully used to answer the question in the conclusion. Thus, as the model relies on too theoretical and simplistic assumptions and has strong limitations as regards the sectors to be studied, the quality of the analysis for this theme was deemed low.

Concerning the theme 3 *Rural development and the environment*, the analysis was weakened by the limited effort of the consultants to deepen and complement the regional case studies and to get an additional data/information through the use of secondary sources of information in order to fill in gaps in information. The analysis of the interviews was also not deepened and therefore brought limited results.

Consequently, the analyses of the evaluation were considered too superficial.

Global assessment: **poor**

6. **Credible findings:** Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?

The assumptions and limitations of each evaluation tool have been put forward in the text of the report, but the findings are often not put in perspective with them (see also point 7).

Generally speaking, the findings were judged credible, although the explanations of them would sometimes have needed to be elaborated.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

7. **Validity of the conclusions:** Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?

The conclusions often rely too mainly on the modelling work (themes 1 *Market equilibrium and price stability* and some parts of theme 4 *Overall impacts*), of which the limits have been mentioned in the above points (3, 4, 5). Furthermore, the assumptions and limitations of the modelling are often forgotten when concluding, that may lead to misinterpretations and invalid conclusions.

Moreover, the steering group considers that the findings of the description and the analysis of the historical functioning of the policy instruments (especially for the first evaluation theme on *Market equilibrium and price stability*) and the secondary data analyses were not sufficiently exploited in the conclusions. The validity of the conclusions is therefore considered lowered by the limited efforts of the evaluator to access and to use these sources.

Occasionally they seem rather to be founded on previous assumptions by the evaluator (for example for theme 3 *Rural development and Environment*, regional distribution of the pig production), although the steering group had been continually asking for further justifications.

Global assessment: **poor**

8. **Usefulness of the recommendations:** Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?

There are few recommendations in the report. When there are, they are not detailed (for example for the price reporting system) and sometimes not justified properly (for example recommendation for the aid for private storage, pig meat sector).

Furthermore, the recommendations mainly refer to one, or at best two, aspect(s) (economic efficiency improvement or better consistency with trade policy or consumer welfare gains through price fall), ignoring other relevant EU policy aspects: the common agriculture policy objectives, the evolving needs, problems, the new society's preoccupations...The recommendations should actually be given

according to the largest possible scope of relevant economic, social and environmental policy aspects and according to the largest scope of evaluation dimensions: relevance of the objectives, effectiveness of the instrument, efficiency of one instrument towards another to achieve the same result, coherence, consistency and usefulness...

Global assessment: **poor**

9. **Clearly reported:** Does the report clearly describe the policy evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood?

The structure and the presentation of the report and the language are clear enough. Nevertheless the report is still deemed too long by the steering group: further efforts of synthetic drafting and of concentration of information would have helped to reduce the length significantly.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

<b>Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is<sup>2</sup> :</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>1. Meeting the needs:</b> Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?			X		
<b>2. Relevant scope:</b> Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?		X			
<b>3. Defensible design:</b> Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions?		X			
<b>4. Reliable data:</b> To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?			X		
<b>5. Sound analysis:</b> Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way?		X			
<b>6. Credible findings:</b> Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?			X		
<b>7. Validity of the conclusions:</b> Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?		X			
<b>8. Usefulness of the recommendations:</b> Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?		X			
<b>9. Clearly reported:</b> Does the report clearly describe the policy evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood?			X		
<b>Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered :</b>		X			

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<sup>2</sup> The judgement of the report as being poor is understood by the steering group as not drawing into question compliance with the contract, while indicating significant weaknesses in the report