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EVALUATION OF THE MARKET MEASURES IN THE BEEF AND VEAL SECTOR

Quality judgement of the final report submitted by ERNST & YOUNG ET ASSOCIES

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

This quality judgement 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.

It has to be pointed out that the judgement is not made on the contents of the results, conclusions or recommendations reached by the contractor, but on the methodology used for obtaining them.

1. MEETING THE NEEDS: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?

The evaluation study fits the Terms of Reference and meets the information needs of the Commission. All evaluation questions and themes have been addressed. The limits of the approaches used are well laid out.

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?

The evaluation examines the different market instruments in the beef and veal sector and takes well into account the policy changes which took place during the examination period. Unintended effects and other factors, notably the link with the milk sector are considered as well.

As concerns the geographical scope, the requirements of the Terms of Reference are fulfilled. However in the answers to some questions the situation in individual Member States could be better addressed.

Global assessment: **good**

- 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?**

The overall design of this study is, within the limits of the analysis, (see point 5) sound and well developed. There is a link between the main issues of this study, notably the market and the income analysis. However, due to the lack of clarity of the report (see point 9), the overall design is not easy to be identified for the reader.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

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

The contractor had access to data provided by the Commission services, which were treated correctly and well presented. In particular, the FADN (Farm Accountancy Data Network) was well used for the income analysis. These data were completed by data from third countries and qualitative data gathered through interviews and questionnaires.

However, the contractor could have made more intensive use of scientific literature in this domain, in particular existing quantitative analysis, and could have integrated more data coming from national sources in the report.

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?**

Due to the non-availability of a comprehensive model for this rather complex sector, the quantitative analysis on market impacts had to rely on partial approaches and estimates, the limitations of which are well laid out.

The income analysis which is based essentially on FADN data is well developed. It could only be more specified by Member States and regions in some cases. The farm typology developed and the approaches applied can be useful for further studies on this sector.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

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 most noteworthy evaluation findings result from the income analysis where the importance of market support for different categories of beef farms is highlighted. The findings on the market impact result from the partial quantitative approaches and the observation of market developments.

In general, the findings are credible, clearly reported and justified.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

7. VALIDITY OF THE CONCLUSIONS: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?

The conclusions are established in an understandable manner and based on credible results. They are, nevertheless, to some extent limited due to the limits of the analytical methods applied.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

8. USEFULNESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?

Given the reduced importance of market measures in the present policy context, there is not much room for recommendations to be made. This fact is well reflected and the recommendations put forward take well into account the new policy context after the 2003 reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, as well as present and possible future WTO constraints.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

9. CLEAR REPORT: 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 report is far too voluminous (300 instead of a maximum of 200 pages) and partly difficult to read and to follow as concerns the answers to the individual evaluation questions. This could have been avoided, despite the huge amount of information to be treated, by a more appropriate design of the report in putting detailed aspects of the answers in the annex.

There are at least introduction chapters to each theme and synthetic conclusion parts on the market and income issues which help the reader to find his/her way through the report.

Global assessment: **poor**

10. ASSESSMENT OF THE REPORT AS A WHOLE

Taking into account the aspects mentioned above and the contextual constraints, the report can be considered **satisfactory**.

Quality assessment grid for the evaluation of the beef market measures

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:	Unaccep- table	Formally correct but weak	Satisfac- tory	Good	Excel- lent
1. Meeting the needs: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?			X		
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?				X	
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?			X		
4. Reliable data: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?			X		
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?			X		
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?			X		
7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results? Are they unbiased ?			X		
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?			X		
9. Clear report: 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			
Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered			X		