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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate E – Markets  
The Director (acting)

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**MINUTES**  
**JOINT MEETING OF**  
**The CDG ANIMAL PRODUCTS – PIGMEAT SECTOR**  
**AND**  
**The EXPERT GROUP FOR AGRICULTURAL MARKETS, in particular concerning**  
**aspects falling under the single CMO Regulations**  
**subgroup Animal Products**  
*10 March 2022*

**EUROPEAN PIGMEAT REFLECTION GROUP – KICK-OFF MEETING**

Chair: **Michael SCANNELL**, Deputy Director-General, DG AGRI

Delegations present:

- All Member States registered, except for Portugal;
- All organisations registered, except for Bee Life, BEUC, EuroCommerce, EFNCP, EMB, EPHA, ERPA, FESASS, IFOAM and BirdLife Europe.

**1. Approval of the agenda**

**2. Nature of the meeting**

The meeting was non-public.

**3. List of points discussed**

**3.1. Opening speech by Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski**

The Commissioner opened the meeting by referring to the troubled times in which it was taking place, that could not be imagined when the setting up of the group was decided and have consequences on the pigmeat sector as well as on many others.

Indeed the war in Ukraine is impacting pigmeat both in terms of input costs and trade disruption. Pigmeat, together with poultrymeat, is among the main EU exports to Ukraine and the EU pig sector is heavily dependent on grains and oilseeds imported from Ukraine, notably wheat, maize and sunflower meal.

This adds to the pigmeat sector's serious difficulties of the past 12 months, linked to Covid-19 restrictions, slowdown of exports to China, further spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) to more MS, and soaring input costs, while production continued increasing. The way forward requires in-depth reflection, as present difficulties go beyond the seasonal fluctuations of the pig cycle.

After urging participants to actively participation in the reflection group, the Commissioner inaugurated the new webpage developed as a repository for the group's work:

### **3.2. Operation of the group by AGRI E3 Head of Unit Brigitte Misonne**

The timeline and main topics for discussion of the European Pigmear Reflection Group were presented through a PPT available on the webpage.

Five meetings are planned until the end of the year. Each meeting will be dedicated to a specific topic and should produce an output that will be shared on the webpage for the benefit of all. The five meeting reports will flow into a final report with possible recommendations.

The first of those meetings is taking place online on 6 April. It is dedicated to the sector's socio-economic dynamics. Further meetings will deal with the sector's environmental and climate challenges, as well as animal health and welfare considerations. The debate will be steered by targeted questions.

For the kick-off meeting, participants were invited to reflect on the following questions, driven by prevailing surging input costs, further aggravated by the war in Ukraine:

- **Q1:** To what extent does EU internal market balance need imported animal feed?
- **Q2:** Does import for animal feed increase crisis risks or does it play a role in hedging risks?

The meeting report will include not only the views expressed by the speakers (market actors, academics, Member States' authorities, Commission officials) but also those that may have been sent in writing.

### **3.3. Import dependence for animal feed by Nicolas Coudry-Mesny, Vice-President of FEFAC**

An ad-hoc expert from FEFAC outlined the situation of animal feed imports, as impacted by the war in Ukraine. Imports have stopped from Russia and Ukraine since Russia's invasion. Europe consumes 100 million t maize, among which 15 million t are imported. 8 million t corn were imported from Ukraine and a bit less from Russia. Some EU Member States are particularly dependent on maize imports (PT, NL 68%). Some countries (IT, ES, PT) are at risk of immediate disruption of supply.

Some vessels had left Black Sea ports in the early days of the war without appropriate documentation. FEFAC thanked the Commission for trying to solve the issue wherever possible. FEFAC asked for more flexibility as regards MRLs and GMOs to allow for finding alternative supply sources, mainly from Argentina and the USA.

FEFAC confirmed its support to the Farm to Fork Strategy and Green Deal but asked for a temporary (3 months) suspension of bioethanol production, to give priority to food and feed production. Some 6-7 million t corn are used in Europe to produce ethanol.

FEFAC believes that supplying the non-GM and organic markets might prove problematic given the large amount of non-GM sunflower meals imported from Russia and large quantities of imported organic cereals.

Feed prices have increased by 20-30% in the last year and FEFAC is expecting a further increase in the coming months. FEFAC supports the opening of PSA for pigmeat, for fear that production would decrease. FEFAC estimates a 50% reduction in production in Ukraine.

Allowing production on set aside land might not be enough, according to FEFAC, for lack of affordable seeds and fertilizers.



### 3.4. Exchange of views with the participants

Representatives from three organisations took the floor (one in the chat).

Three representatives of **COPA-COGECA**: they asked for a derogation to allow the import of GM feed from the Americas. He stressed the critical situation of farmers in Spain and Portugal due to severe drought. Present feed stocks will only last for the next 30 days. COPA-COGECA believes that Europe's dependence on imports from third countries will only cease when the EU truly commits to an ambitious plant protein plan, using biotechnology (GMOs) or new gene editing techniques (NGTs). According to COPA-COGECA, using new tools (backed by science and by European agencies, EFSA and ECHA) will avoid the need to increase agricultural area and thus help achieve the aspirational goals of the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Representatives of COPA-COGECA asked for including the issue of strategic feed stocks in the list of topics for discussion. Currently, the biggest concern is the supply of feed to animals. COPA-COGECA supported FEFAC's call for a temporary suspension of bioethanol production and derogations on GMOs and Maximum Residue levels (MRLs). COPA-COGECA focused on continued food availability for EU consumers and on the social consequences of higher food prices, requesting a rapid decision allowing for production on set aside land.

COPA-COGECA urged the Commission to act quickly and adopt specific measures to counter the surge in input costs (feed, electricity, gas, fuel).

Replying to the meeting's questions (in the chat), COPA-COGECA stated that on the one hand, importing feed gives greater security when confronted with droughts and floods. It also counterbalances Europe's export interests. On the other hand, the war in Ukraine shows how import dependence makes Europe weak. According to COPA-COGECA, the solution is for Europe to have an ambitious plant protein plan.

A representative of the **European Environmental Bureau (EEB)** stressed the danger of abandoning biodiversity for the sake of giant slaughterhouses, sows in cages, and too much and too cheap meat. The EEB believes that the number of pigs in the EU should be reduced, mentioning the example of the Netherlands.

A representative of **CELCAA** (in the chat) disagreed with the view expressed by the EEB, putting the emphasis in the chat on the sector's role in world food security.

Two Member States' representatives took the floor (one in the chat).

**France** attributed the crisis in the pork sector to overproduction and over-reliance on exports to the Chinese market, as well as the spread of ASF, and increasing feed costs, further aggravated by the war in Ukraine, putting at stake the profitability of small and medium sized farms. The recent increase in pig prices is not enough to restore profitability. PSA for pigmeat will give an important signal but will not be enough to solve the crisis. It is also important to provide food aid to Ukraine. The Commission should activate measures under Article 219 of the CMO Regulation to support the most vulnerable sectors (poultry and pig). This support should be supplemented by national measures.

**Poland** (in the chat) expressed hope that the establishment of the European Pigmear Reflection Group will allow developing a detailed diagnosis of the sector's situation and adopting effective solutions, given the ongoing crisis, further aggravated by the war in Ukraine. Prices and availability are difficult to predict. The feed industry in Poland already reported a lack of the necessary feed components, including sunflower and soybean oil as well as meal.

**The chair** reported on the debates held at an extraordinary AGRIFISH Council on 2 March and on the preparation of a package of measures to address the consequences of the war in Ukraine on EU agriculture. Some measures also concern the pigmeat sector. Private Storage Aid for pig meat is being considered as well as a measure under Article 219 of the CMO Regulation that requires the use of the crisis reserve, subject to the agreement of the Council and European Parliament. Other measures are under consideration, in particular on how to increase production and reduce the EU's dependency on import of animal feed. He also reported on a first meeting of the newly created expert group for European Food Security crisis preparedness and response, part of the contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security. Other flexibilities are discussed with DG SANTE (MRLs, GMOs, etc.). He referred to a future Communication on food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems to be adopted by the Commission later this month, that comes in addition to the Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy adopted on 8 March.

#### **4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions**

Mr W. Burtscher, Director-General of DG AGRI, closed the meeting by pointing out at issues that the reflection group needs to take account of. He referred to available CAP instruments and limited budget outside the CAP budget, in particular in view of the arrival of millions of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. He underlined the availability of risk management tools in the CAP. In terms of business model, while EU agriculture is creating jobs and revenues for farmers, he drew attention to its heavy reliance on resources coming from other parts of the world with related environmental, biodiversity and climate risks. The group should search for the right balance in future business models.

EU agriculture should provide affordable food across the continent. People should have an opportunity to eat and drink what is produced locally. This must still be possible in future, without the competitiveness of some pushing others out of business.

Food security and availability is one of the key principles. The Commission is ready to look at temporary measures to mitigate current challenges but the way forward is clear when it comes to mid- and long-term orientations and goals.

#### **5. Next steps**

The Commission asked participants to send their written contributions before or after the group meeting.

#### **6. Next meeting**

6 April 2022

(e-signed)

Michael SCANNELL

**List of participants**  
**JOINT MEETING OF**  
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<b>Country</b>	<b>Ministry or Organisation</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Gouvernement of Flanders - Departement of Agriculture</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>SPWARNE</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Danish Agricultural Agency</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft</b>
<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Ministry of Rural Affairs</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine</b>
<b>Greece</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
<b>Spain</b>	<b>MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN</b>
<b>Spain</b>	<b>Permanent Representation</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>FranceAgriMer</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>Ministère de l'agriculture</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>PermRep</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>

<b>Italy</b>	<b>MIPAAF</b>
<b>Cyprus</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Permanent Representation</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Rural Support Service MoA</b>
<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Permanent Representation of Lithuania</b>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	<b>Représentation permanente du GD de Luxembourg auprès de l'UE</b>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	<b>Service d'économie rurale</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture</b>
<b>Malta</b>	<b>Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights</b>
<b>Malta</b>	<b>Public Abattoir, Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland</b>
<b>Austria</b>	<b>BMLRT</b>
<b>Poland</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</b>
<b>Poland</b>	<b>PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF POLAND IN BRUSSELS</b>
<b>Romania</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</b>
<b>Romania</b>	<b>Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU</b>
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food</b>
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>Ministry of agricultural and rural development of the Slovak republic</b>
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>Permanent representation of the Slovak republic</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry</b>

<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Board of Agriculture</b>
	<b>AnimalhealthEurope</b>
	<b>CEJA</b>
	<b>CELCAA</b>
	<b>COGECA</b>
	<b>COPA</b>
	<b>ECVC</b>
	<b>EEB</b>
	<b>EFA</b>
	<b>EFFAT</b>
	<b>FoodDrinkEurope</b>
	<b>Ad-hoc Speaker</b>