

Citizens want a CAP that targets sustainability

Organic farming¹ can deliver best solutions to meet public demands

Brussels, 19/07/2010 – The European Commission today opened a two-day conference to debate the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and to discuss the results of the related public consultation². These results clearly show that the public gives high priority to sustainable resource use, supply of healthy food and the maintenance of diverse farming systems throughout the EU. System approaches, such as **organic farming, can deliver the best solutions to meet these demands.**

“On the occasion of the CAP conference and the official launch by the Commission of the new European Organic Logo by Commissioner Ciolos, we welcome the Commission’s commitment towards organic food and farming and thus hope and expect that organic systems will be given priority in the future CAP”, comments *Christopher Stopes*, President of the IFOAM EU Group³. “The only fair deal is to spend taxpayer’s money through the CAP in a way that best serves the public interest whilst ensuring sustainable land use and socio-economic stability. **The CAP needs to be seriously re-shaped to meet these demands and a well-regulated organic food system is an excellent working model!**”

“We have to prioritise sustainable food and farming systems that deliver public goods such as diverse landscapes and the maintenance of ecosystem services such as fertile soils and clean water while ensuring a fair income for farmers”, underlines Prof. *Urs Niggli*, Director of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FibL), IFOAM member and speaker at the Commission conference. “Single measures are no answer to the complex demands of society and the future challenges we are facing. Therefore, we call on Commissioner Ciolos to invest in system approaches such as **organic farming that deliver on several areas of sustainability.** Organic farming performs well on climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, the delivery of clean water and stable soil while producing high-quality food and should therefore be prioritised in all CAP axes and measures⁴.”

“The IFOAM EU Group has made a good start to the CAP debate in outlining a **Common Proposal** on a new CAP with likeminded NGOs⁵”, adds Dorota Metera, IFOAM EU Group Board member, “the debate must continue and lead to a CAP that has the broad support of society. Therefore we support the www.arc2020.eu⁶.”

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NOTES:

- (1) **Organic farming** is a role model of well balanced provision of commodity and public goods output (Source: Niggli 2010 and IFOAM EU Group factsheets <http://www.ifoam-eu.org/positions/factsheets/index.php>):
 - Biodiversity: 30 % higher species diversity and 50 % greater abundance of fauna; similar results for flora.
 - Climate change mitigation potential: Increased Soil Organic Matter or C_{org}-contents, ranging from 10 to 60 %; no use of synthetic N fertiliser
 - Improved biological properties of soils: ranging from 40 to 120 %.
 - Increased soil aggregate stability.
 - Increased water holding capacity, higher water content in soil.
 - Improved infiltration rate of water.
 - 35 to 65 % less nitrogen leaches from arable fields into deeper soil zones.
 - 96 % less kg pesticides applied per hectare
 - Organic holdings tend to diversify into value-added activities, with farmers branching out into on-site processing of agricultural products and direct marketing.
- (2) “Your ideas matter” On 12 April 2010 the Commissioner invited all interested EU citizens and organisations - whether or not they work in the area of agriculture - to join the debate on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy, its principles and objectives. This online debate stayed open till 11 June 2010. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/debate/index_en.htm
- (3) The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 300 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations include: consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.
- (4) “CAP post 2013 - Smart change or business as usual”, Position Paper of the IFOAM EU group, 2010 http://www.ifoam-eu.org/positions/Papers/pdf/Position_IFOAMEU_CAP_final_7.05.2010.pdf
- (5) Proposal for a new EU Common Agricultural Policy, Common position paper Birdlife, EEB, EFNCP, WWF and IFOAM EU Group, 2009, http://www.ifoam-eu.org/positions/publications/pdf/Proposal_for_a_new_common_agricultural_policy_FINAL_03.2010.pdf
- (6) The Agricultural and Rural Convention (ARC) process aims to give civil society a strong voice and to prepare a powerful common message for a new European agricultural and rural policy. The ARC complements and enhances the “Your Ideas Matter” initiative launched by the European Commission on 12 April 2010. www.arc2020.eu