

Big steps towards a sustainable CAP needed before 2013

Brussels, 02/06/2009 - The EU Ministers for Agriculture agreed today, at the end of their informal meeting in Brno, on a common declaration for the future of the Common Agriculture Policy. IFOAM EU Group's (1) response to this is that the challenges the agriculture policy is facing - to guarantee food availability while halting loss of biodiversity, climate change, water scarcity, energy supply, and volatility of prices - were well identified by the ministers, but serious steps to tackle these challenges must follow in order to make the 2013 reform of the CAP a real success.

"In all the last reforms, the steps to make agriculture more sustainable have been nothing but small. Ministers need now to make a serious effort, if they want to make the new CAP in 2013 a success", says Thomas Dosch, Vice President of IFOAM EU.

"Agriculture can guarantee a sufficient, high quality food supply and at the same time deliver environmental performance in tackling climate change, preserving biodiversity and improved water management. But since the market price of food alone does not pay for environmental services of farmers, a serious shift of money must be foreseen to programmes that allow agriculture to meet the challenges, as identified by the ministers", according to Dosch. "Agriculture payments will only be justifiable in the future if they are used for services that benefit environment and society."

Organic agriculture has many assets to offer in order to meet the challenges in all areas that are now discussed. An example on tackling climate change: The CO₂ output to produce the wheat for one bread in Austria has been found to be half in organic agriculture compared to the CO₂ footprint of the same amount of conventional wheat (1kg bread = 129 g CO₂ in organic agriculture compared to 270 g CO₂ in conventional agriculture (2). This difference is mainly caused by the high energy input used for the production of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser in conventional agriculture. Moreover, organic farming increases the content of organic matter in the soil, therefore soils under organic farming can lock up to 1,5 tons CO₂ per hectare and year (3). The examples can be easily continued. "Organic farming must be taken into consideration as a best practice example for modelling the new CAP", summarises the Vice President of IFOAM EU.

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Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

NOTES:

(1) 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.

(2) Source: Study "Klimaschutzkennzeichnung biologischer und konventioneller Lebensmittel", FiBL Austria in Cooperation with Hofer KG, 2009, see:

<http://www.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/de/oesterreich/arbeitschwerpunkte/Klima/lindenthal-praesentation-pk-2009-05-27.pdf>

(3) Source: Speech Urs Niggli, Press conference in Vienna 27 Mai 2009, see:

http://www.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/de/oesterreich/arbeitschwerpunkte/Klima/Niggli_Klimapressekonferenz_090527.pdf