

1st Forum for the Future of Agriculture

Debate on the objectives for
European agriculture in the XXIst Century

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The official executive summary



Former EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“We cannot tackle tomorrow’s challenges with yesterday’s policy toolkit. We need a modern policy framework which enables our farmers to meet world food demand in an environmentally sustainable way. We must first identify the most important tools to meet these challenges, and then reassess the budgetary means required.”

Franz Fischler, Chairman of the Forum and of the RISE Foundation and former EU Agriculture Commissioner.

Forum Objective

Initiated by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta, this new forum calls for a re-evaluation of policies affecting agriculture, food and the environment in Europe. Bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders, it aims to catalyze thinking on the way European agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges that it faces in delivering food and environmental security.

The Forum has been created in response to a belief that many EU policies impacting on agriculture are focused on solving yesterday's problems. New challenges include feeding a growing world population, demand for a higher quality diet, increased demand for renewable sources of energy and changing weather patterns. With limited arable land available, there is a need to sustainably maximize production.

The Forum believes there is a case for an integrated European food and environmental security policy which is based on the principles of the Single Market, the harmonization of evolving EU food and environmental policies, the Göteborg Declaration, the Lisbon process and the recognition of the essential role that agricultural technologies play in delivering economic, social and environmental benefits. The Forum intends to take forward the conclusions of this inaugural debate and to work with stakeholders in shaping the development of European agricultural and environmental policy.

Key Findings

There is increasing concern about the global trends in population, economic growth, rising demand from changing dietary patterns (particularly in India and China) and availability of natural resources such as good arable land, soil and water. This is balanced by a need to reverse environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and the threat to cultural landscapes.

Market failure has occurred in both food supply and environmental security. Neither has received sufficient government attention, nor been tackled with the necessary degree of urgency. This includes the WTO, which has so far failed to consider the way production takes place.

Delegates to the forum understood the responsibility of European agriculture to do more in meeting world food demand and fighting world hunger, but argued for the need to do this in a sustainable manner. Delegates believed that sustainability in agriculture requires more research and development of good farming practices and the application of new technologies.

But delegates also focused on the need to maintain the process of reforming the CAP up to and beyond 2013. As European agriculture is increasingly market-driven, appropriate tools need to be put into place to address widespread market failures. These market failures were perceived to be partly the result of technology shortfalls, reflected in the looming world food imbalance, but also included growing water shortages, rising energy prices, and the damage caused by dated farming methods.



Delegates also argued that the delivery of public goods such as low-impact farming and the maintenance of landscapes and wildlife habitats cannot emerge from the market system alone. They require farmers to take specific actions that carry extra costs which the market does not cover. In order to maintain such services, farmers need to be remunerated by specific and targeted public payments if society is to enjoy these public goods.

Perhaps most of all, conference delegates were alarmed by the trends and prospects regarding world food and environmental security. They recognize the economic, social and political implications of these systemic failures, but were equally concerned that the response by the EU and National Governments has thus far been insufficient to heed the warnings of institutions such as the UN, World Bank, OECD and other leading world establishments.

Throughout the conference, the 350 delegates were asked to share their views on a range of subjects relating to the panel discussions. The key highlights from the polls are:

- 83% (70% at the beginning of the conference and 83% at the end) believe that the main objective of the CAP should be food security as well as environmental security.
- More than half said not enough is being done by EU member state governments to address the food challenge and 29% felt that governments had been doing nothing at all.
- Supporting food supply is seen as the overall priority while 26% want price management as well. Some 94% want more investments, more innovation, and more frequent sustainability assessments.
- Over 70% think European agriculture is environmentally sustainable, and more than 50% think that all environmental challenges in EU-land use, soil erosion, water quality, biodiversity are very important.
- Regarding rural development, 65% want it strengthened given the important role it plays in sustainable agriculture.
- 94% believe that more investment, research and innovation are required to guarantee the overall sustainability of European agriculture.

- There was no agreement on any single critical factor enabling agriculture to respond to the challenges we face. However, the use of agricultural technologies was clearly acknowledged as a crucial if not leading factor in revolutionizing European access to better food.

Overall, delegates made a strong call for action. The objectives of European agriculture, food and environmental security must be pursued with appropriate tools and not left to the market alone. Delegates recognized that technologies such as agricultural biotech have an essential role to play.

However, not surprisingly, they also said that EU public opinion must be reassured before modern technology can be introduced and then only if thorough safety standard impact assessments have been carried out and approved.

Nevertheless, most delegates concluded that the escalating food prices are a “wake up” call to politicians and interest groups who must urgently discuss food security, the sustainability of food production and the need to take appropriate steps in conjunction with all stakeholders.

(Full results from the opinion polls are available on www.syngenta.com and www.elo.org)

Panel sessions

Is the objective: European Agriculture Food, or Environmental Security, or both?

Franz FISCHLER, former EU Agriculture Commissioner, Chairman of the RISE Foundation:

Food and environmental security are equally important and interrelated targets cannot be left to the market alone. They must be actively pursued with the appropriate tools, not just in Europe, but across the world.

It cannot be left to the market and to technology to find a balance between various, partly contradictory demands across sectors without unpalatable consequences in terms of sectoral outcomes and income distribution within and among countries. The market needs coordinated direction on the type of policies needed for energy, water, transportation, environment and indeed agricultural and rural development. The policies must also be the most appropriate ones in order to tackle the world's overall socio-economic and political security requirements, including those of the developing countries. What happens there will have an overall even greater impact than what happens in the advanced industrial countries.

As for technology, it has an essential role to play regarding both food and environment. New technologies capable of raising land productivity are shrinking and will be of diminishing help as yields of wheat, rice, and corn press against the ceiling ultimately imposed by the limits of photosynthetic efficiency. A much greater contribution can be expected from biotechnology, provided public opinion is prepared to support it.

Current negative attitudes in Europe will need to change as the next GMO generation comes on stream. But this new technology should of course not be introduced without exhaustive impact assessment.

We should be cautious in not letting the belief that technology alone will allow us to ensure sustainable world food production for all and reduce world hunger in accordance with UN targets, or stop, let alone reverse climate change. Caution is also of the essence in dropping technology without judgment as to whether the pros outweigh the cons, and whether there is scope for parallel action regarding the demand and trends in life-styles.

The risks of weakening or scrapping the CAP include: production intensification with increased pollution, land abandonment with rural desertification and reduced farm output, accelerated urbanization with additional infrastructure and environmental costs, potential difficulties for the internal market, higher world food prices with serious humanitarian, economic and political consequences, in particular for the poor at home and for the net-food-importing developing countries.

Substantial investments will be needed to help respect cross-compliance rules and make farming more sustainable. Investments are also needed to deal with the damaging externalities of production such as water pollution, promoting organic farming, adopting new, expensive

technologies at an early stage, and rewarding farmers for the actual delivery of public goods, including the preservation of extensive farming. A real shift in CAP support towards rural development is of the essence. The CAP must substantially increase its assistance to the multifunctional tasks of European agriculture so as to provide the services to society that the market does not pay for.

Slashing CAP support as from 2014 would thus mean the European Council's failure to appreciate that over-exploitation of natural resources together with urbanization and globalization make it more, rather than less important to provide the budgetary means to tackle the challenges that we address here to-day.

We need to call for renewed agricultural policy objectives for the next half-century and for special action affecting food supplies and environmental improvements. This requires the further development of CAP, as well as the budgetary resources appropriate to meet the food and environmental challenges and produce the required security on both accounts.

Jos DEBELKE, Deputy Director General,
DG Environment, EC

Mr Debelke clarified where we currently stand in relation to the EU environmental policy and its implementation in regards to agriculture. Indicating the environmental realities of the coming decades as well as initiatives in pipeline, Mr Debelke identified climate change, biodiversity loss and the depletion of natural resources as the current challenges and ones that will continue into the future. He believes that environmental changes will force practical changes at farm level regardless of policy, but

comprehensive policy changes can mitigate and make change less dramatic. He also considers better use of resources, including phosphorus, nitrogen and especially water, as absolutely vital. He applauds the fact that environmental issues were put so high on the agenda for the 1st Forum.

The shape of environmental policy very much depends on what is happening today – the more we implement, the more we see practical problems. The fields of agriculture are making developments as we increasingly consider biodiversity and water. However, we need to limit the costs of agriculture in the future and so must not think about the costs of policies today. He clarified where we currently stand in relation to EU environmental policy and its implementation as regards agriculture, and indicated environmental realities of coming decades as well as initiatives in the pipeline.

We must take into account the question of energy when thinking about efficiency and intensive methods. Climate change is becoming more and more evident and it is going to change the nature of the environmental problems we encounter.

We need to ensure the world is fed, deal with water management, make better use of resources, implement a water Framework Directive, make agriculture more energy-efficient, reduce greenhouse gases, set up a carbon trading scheme, create the right balance when positioning biofuels and create certainty for farmers investing in biofuels.

The old challenges facing the environment – water and use of resources, must be tackled by today's issues – biodiversity and climate change.

Agriculture and the question of food security

MODERATOR:

Neil PARISH, MEP and Chairman of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee
The emerging economies in the Far East are affecting the overall chain of food demand and supply. We must address the issue of food security with urgency, taking into account where the shifts are coming from and how these can be best dealt with.



Chair of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, Neil Parish

What do we mean by food security?

John BENSTED-SMITH, Director for Economic Analysis, Perspectives & Evaluations, DG Agriculture, EC

To ensure availability and supplies which reach the consumer at the right price, we must enable production to respond to signals.

Organization by sector proves to be very difficult. Responding to price signals must be looked at from an economic perspective.

Dealing with one objective should not create repercussions for another. And is there a trade-off between security and biodiversity? These are the questions we must acknowledge.

Who has food security?

Stefan TANGERMANN, Director, Food, Agriculture & Fisheries, OECD

There is a new demand for agricultural products: raw materials for energy production. The issue is not whether there

will be global food security but who will be food-secure. Biofuels polices drive up food prices and undermine food security among poor families.

How can food security be achieved?

Timothy HALL, Acting Director of
Biotechnology, Agriculture and Food
Research, DG Research, EC

Some of the most important challenges we have to consider are:

- Climate change will have many effects such as water shortages and unpredictability of supply, higher temperatures, spread of exotic or neglected animal and plant diseases and soil degradation.
- Competition for land use between food production and biomass crops for energy, fiber and green chemicals, habitat protection and biodiversity preservation and recreation.
- Significant global population increases (around 25%) over the next 25-40 years together with rapidly increasing calorie and meat consumption per capita.

We must find ways to maximize food production in a sustainable way. Research can provide a number of potential technology options for reducing the impact of this while addressing socio-economic aspects.

Potential advances include better exploitation of the genetic potential of crop plants and livestock, reduction of crop/livestock losses due to pests and pathogens, efficient conversion of biomass to energy and/or green chemicals and developments in precision farming.

Since "food security" is a global issue,

international collaboration beyond Europe is essential. Increased coordination across Europe and more pooling of resources will improve efficiency of the current total European effort. Additional financial resources must also be allocated to agri-related research in the near future.

Discussion points:

- From an ecological sustainable development standpoint, the key question which needs to be answered is whether extensive or intensive farming offers the best solution.
- Concern was raised about the wrong choices being made through knee-jerk reactions born out of political necessity. Delegates clearly wanted a more level-headed approach to decision making in this area.
- Panellists and delegates debated why an informed discussion on GM is still so rare in the European Parliament which prevents a proper assessment of its utility in providing solutions to future challenges.
- Questions were raised about why EU research in this area is often short-term when long-term studies also generate very important findings. It was felt that such long term research must be increased.
- The focus on biofuels brings climate change into perspective but delegates wondered what the future will be if biofuels production results in land needed for food production being lost.
- Delegates felt that the subject of soil is too often ignored and should be discussed in more detail, given the fact that without fertile land, discussions about increased production are invalid.
- Delegates also wondered why holistic approaches such as integrated farming are not addressed.

Agriculture and the question of environmental security – meeting the Eco-System Challenge

MODERATOR:

Nigel ARNELL, Director, Walker Institute for Climate Systems Research, University of Reading, UK

Environmental security also involves an eco-system challenge. A healthy eco-system is vital for the future and ultimately the agricultural cycle.



What do you mean by environmental security?

Allan BUCKWELL, Chief Economist,
Country Land & Business Association

The environmental challenge is to halt biodiversity loss while increase resource protection (soil, water & air). Europe leads in determining standards for environmental protection and the interaction between these two challenges is crucial. Agriculture is highly dependent on the environment and the environment is greatly affected by agriculture. We currently face a technical and an incentives challenge.

The real target is the EU budget as the demand on what we want from our land managers is increasing. There are pervasive market failures surrounding these activities. We must secure the appropriate budget for

the future as this necessitates the further evolution of CAP.

What is environmental security for?

Michael HAMELL, Head of Unit,
Agriculture, Forest, and Soil, DG
Environment, EC

Land and land use generate many difficulties. The problematic questions such as soil and biodiversity must be addressed. Sustainability must also be highly recognized as environmental integration is crucial in achieving long term security.

Environmental security presents global and local challenges. The parameters are individually understood but not collectively. Policy makers must work with scientists and the entire agricultural and forest sectors in finding common solutions.

What are the main eco-system challenges?

John FINISDORE, World Resources
Institute

CLIMATE CHANGE MAY DOMINATE HEADLINES TODAY. ECOSYSTEM DEGRADATION WILL DO SO TOMORROW. The global challenges and those here in Europe are tremendous. Demand for agricultural goods will continue to rise. Enhancing the services of crop, livestock

and aquaculture provision while reversing the deterioration of others requires several initiatives, among them are: Enhanced information systems,

NEW TOOLS AND INCENTIVES FOR ECOSYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND RESTORATION.

In response, the EU and several European countries themselves are exploring ecosystem audits as part of their formal policies. Tools are being developed by scientists, policy makers, and advocates including WRI's Corporate Ecosystem Services Review, the WBCSD Water Tool, the University of Vermont's valuation mapping tools among many, many others. Ensuring flexibility is essential. We also need to pay attention to the larger regulatory framework. Increasing resources devoted to modelling and responding to these changes in Europe and around the world should be emphasized.

How can environmental security be achieved?

Tamas MARGHESCU, Regional Director, Europe, IUCN, BE

Environmental security cannot be looked at in isolation. Sustainability is the integrated solution.

Discussion points:

- Delegates argued that the problem of environmental degradation needed to be communicated better. Without strong communication, the message is never clear enough for change.
- When tackling environmental degradation, lessons from the past should be acknowledged and understood. The example of the failed soil strategy in Portugal was cited.

- Delegates believed that land planning should consider the amount of arable land being built on when trying to formulate new food production strategies.
- Delegates also felt that tackling environmental degradation could be helped by using the budget more appropriately rather than simply requesting larger funds.

Case Studies

The subsequent panel members each gave brief presentations of various case studies intended to bring together production and environment. These included **Geoff COATES**, Environmental Projects Manager on 'Operation Bumblebee', **Giuseppe NATTA**, CEO Agroittica Acqua & Sole SPA on 'Neorural activities' (or Third Generation Agriculture), and a look at 'The Effects of Climate Change on European Agriculture' from **Tim WHEELER**, Director of the Plant Environment Laboratory, Reading University.



Syngenta's Geoff Coates talks about Operation Bumblebee

What does Europe need from agriculture?

Winfried BLUM, President, European Confederation of Soil Science Societies (ECSSS)
Security is the archetype of the public good. Food and the environment must be nurtured and we must acknowledge the market failures. Europe should take the lead collectively but this requires a policy change.

Perspective from the agro-food industry

Willem-Jan LAAN, European External Affairs Director, Unilever

From the agro-food industry we need: Higher yields, quality and safety of ingredients, availability of raw material at competitive prices, sustainable agriculture and protection of the environment. Considering the demands in the future, we see an extension of the needs from agriculture: Energy efficiency and the production of energy, GHG-emission reduction (incl. fertilisers and methane), water scarcity and water quality, civil society demands with regard to biodiversity.

Making the right choices for food security requires adequate assessments of the costs/benefits of policy measures. It is our view that this has not been done adequately yet. At the same time we also consider that partnerships in the supply chains could bring mutual benefits. Continual investment into these partnerships for a sustainable future is vital.

Perspective from the food chain

Soren SCHRÖDER, VP Bunge Europe Agribusiness

The EU is a significant global participant in agribusiness and with the addition of the new member states, as well as the proximity to Ukraine and Russia, the EU is well placed

to help promote the agricultural expansion needed to balance world supply/demand.

A new farming reality is emerging: land prices and rural incomes are increasing, global commodity prices are very favourable and farming profitability is excellent. Large investment flows are finding their way into agriculture in Eastern Europe, CIS and South America. With higher commodity prices, less advanced farmers in the developing world will be able to compete and develop efficient agriculture without subsidies. However production to satisfy demographic demand growth is still the key question.

There are three main commercial factors which will influence the pace of expansion: Price, Policy and Political Risk and Infrastructure Development. Europe should therefore address the following issues:

Free trade is required for the EU feed/food industry to survive; GMO approval process must be more effective so Europe is not isolated from world trade in critical goods (proteins and maize); Mandates in biofuels should be of concern; Economics of the margin must be better understood by policy makers as commodities have been “discovered” by the investment community.

There remains the need for the correct mix of technology, finance, and policy. Timing will prevail as the underlying issue and therefore needs urgent government intervention.

Perspective from the environment

Clairie PAPAZOGLU, Birdlife International

The production of food and other market goods should be essentially oriented by a regulated market. We need to ensure it produces healthy, safe, good quality food and that the negative externalities of production, such as water pollution, are minimised. To achieve this, we need a range of tools.

We need good and solid environmental legislation to enforce basic standards and a “do no harm” approach to land use. We need to increase the use of market based instruments (taxation of inputs, water charging, potentially tradable permits, etc.) to send farmers the correct economic signals.

Investment is needed in advisory services, education, research, promotion etc, to allow both farmers and consumers to move towards more sustainable production and consumption. It is also essential to ensure

a level playing field for all producers (inside and outside the EU) by negotiating world wide standards on environmental performance.

The provision of public goods has, therefore, to be remunerated by specific and targeted public payments. Climate change places further importance on improving the sustainability of agriculture and its value to wildlife. The quality of agricultural habitats will determine the ability of many species to move effectively between protected areas. In times of climate change, only healthy and robust ecosystems will be able to deliver the services and products our society needs.

We should strongly promote the production of bio-energy from waste streams (while preserving soil fertility etc). Bio-energy targets should not lead to the large scale displacement of existing agricultural production but we should immediately stop any support to inefficient and unsustainable bio-energy,

It is not about “either” profitable agriculture and food “or” high environmental standards. European agriculture must be about both at the same time.

Perspective from rural development

Corrado PIRZIO-BIROLI, CEO, RISE Foundation

Only a hands-on approach, rejecting the notion that the market will automatically take care of restoring balance. With current consumption patterns there are no limits to growth in food demand whereas there are limits to growth in food supply. Water shortages are more worrying than energy supplies and the lack of energy savings has led greenhouse gas emissions to overtake the capacity for carbon sequestration.



Former Agriculture Chef de Cabinet Pirzio-Biroli

There are many requirements for injecting greater dynamism in rural areas, notably investments, technology and CAP reform. Firstly, we must invest more in food production. Secondly, we also need to invest more in rural infrastructure. Thirdly, and most important, we need to boost investments in technology, in particular in soil and water protection, crop protection, biotechnology, decentralized energy supply and mechanization, which can help limit risks of food shortages and environmental degradation.

The greatest contribution can be expected from biotechnology. In the context of climate change with rising temperatures and water scarcities, GMOs are actually the only hope we have to feed the world sustainably.

Our challenge in Europe is to continue to adapt EU agricultural policy in order to preserve our capacity to sustainably produce enough food for the world, enhance the attractiveness of our countryside, and open our market further. Europe must continue to “lead by example” with its step-by-step CAP reform process. The European Council has failed to appreciate that over-exploitation of natural resources, together with urbanization and globalization have become the most serious challenges to the physical integrity of the countryside, and its way of life. CAP needs rebalancing support in favour of rural development.



Can agriculture deliver what Europe needs?

Andrew BOUNDS, Financial Times

Europe as a continent places itself in a difficult situation. Europe has its needs but looks to the world rather than its neighbours to deliver. Where does agriculture fit into this equation?

Do we have the people?

Pekka PESONEN, Secretary-General,
Copa-Cogeca

The farming sector is dominated by expertise and knowledge. But do we have the people?

Technical competence is crucial and without the upkeep for education, research and adequate reward, it will prove very difficult to maintain if not further the level and quantity of agricultural workers needed.

He stressed the importance and success of the CAP, and that with or without it farmers will have to continue to respond to society's expectations, but that for the continued success of European agriculture and the CAP, highly professional and motivated farmers are essential.

Do we have the natural resources?

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General,
ELO

Land managers play an essential role in the promotion, conservation and preservation of natural resources, including biological diversity, through to the sustainable use of the land and its components.

Their mission is to ensure food and environmental security. Sustainable rural development can be reached through adequate soil management, combined with

the protection of water and of the further natural resources that constitute the rural ecosystem. He stated that we do in Europe have the necessary natural resources, but they need ad hoc management due to the threats of climate change and human activities such as pollution from industry or land abandonment.

The main barrier to the adoption of improved soil and other natural resources management practices in agriculture is cost. These practices can be considered as environmental services which should be compensated according to their nature of public goods. The potential lack of natural resources availability could also be compensated by better access to new technologies.

Do we have the technology?

John ATKIN, Member of the Syngenta
Executive Committee & Chief Operating
Officer (Crop Protection), Syngenta

Europe must be clear about its objectives for agriculture against the background of the exploding global demand for food, but current policies on the regulation of technology risk to damaging the capacity of farmers to respond.

Most experts agree that by 2030 global food production must increase by 50% in order to feed two billion more people and satisfy the higher quality food needs of many others. Whilst the challenges we face in agriculture

John Atkin



are significant, technology can continue to increase productivity as it has done so successfully for the last 40 years. Success will depend on the integration of several technologies, such as advanced crop protection chemicals which have very low application rates and excellent human and environmental safety characteristics, genetically modified crops with in-built protection against insect attack and drought-tolerant varieties which enable crops to be productive in adverse conditions. These are all examples of modern developments which are essential to improve productivity. And if we use this technology effectively, we can meet the demand challenge whilst protecting and enhancing natural resources.

Achieving food and environmental security in Europe in the 21st century is possible, but we need to accept and promote the essential role played by agricultural technology. So my concluding plea is for all stakeholders to work together to develop a progressive approach to policy making and regulation in the EU which is based on science, provides farmers with the tools that they need today and stimulates innovation to produce the agricultural technologies of tomorrow.

Funding for agriculture

Francois d'ORMESSON, Administrator & General Manager, Phitrust Active Investors Portfolio

There is a necessity for philanthropy to “anticipate” and also to guarantee that these “anticipation” actions will have enough independence, freedom and public access to be applied on the field, ensuring the right balance between rural and urban innovations. The philanthropy of the XXIst century, more professional than ever, is characterized by a long-term approach that teaches how to fish instead of only providing the fish.

Discussion points:

- Delegates were particularly interested in understanding whether EU agriculture has the right environment, availability of tools and the necessary supply chain to meet the demands of food security – if the right policies were actually put in place?
- There was also a clear interest in how the CAP might develop after 2013. Some, however, did argue that at this point in time, a whole new policy might also be worth considering.

Can we make the political case for food and environmental security?

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Elaine CRUIKSHANKS, CEO, Hill & Knowlton International Belgium

The future is bright for agriculture. However, without the right policies in place, the landscape can be changed dramatically. We need to insure that the right policies are adopted and implemented. Without doing so, the issues surrounding food and environmental security will prevail, causing greater fear and anxiety across the world and ultimately bringing a real crisis to the world.

Robert STURDY, MEP

It is crucial to acknowledge the changing patterns in agriculture – be it world populations or shift in diet. More importance should be placed on cereals as it is very important for both food and feed. Quality land generates quality produce, so taking a look at the basics of the agriculture cycle is fundamental in getting a policy right.

China and India are major forces in today's agricultural cycle and we need to accept that their needs are increasingly like those in the West. The sooner we accept this, the sooner we can account for the rising costs associated with agriculture.

The African and Caribbean nations worry about food for themselves but we have the ability to assure them. There is no reason as to why the EU should not continue with support mechanisms but GM should be accepted as part of the future.

F-W.Graefe zu BARINGDORF, MEP

GMO's have become a fundamental aspect in our everyday world. Politicians need to realize that this is the case and allow the world to incorporate these as much as possible. Without accepting GMO's, progress is limited and cannot be sustained with the growing pressures in today's world. Politics allows us to address global issues and accepting GMO's is the first step needed urgently.

Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI, MEP

The competitiveness of European agriculture is a kind of myth when considering the capabilities of countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Australia. European farmers are also obliged to implement high standards of production. We have double standards in practice.

From an economic point of view, European agriculture should be abandoned; however we need agriculture as a guarantee of our food supply safety. Therefore as part of safety, rural areas must be conserved and the migration from the countryside to big cities must be stopped.

We have to accept that Europe is uncompetitive in agriculture and we have to save it through appropriate support. European agriculture should be not too intensive or too industrial. The EU agricultural policy should be orientated for the conservation of small family farms which are able to ensure food supply for half a billion European citizens and which are able to protect rural areas effectively.

Discussion points:

- Until the new treaty, there is no EP power for co-decision. We need to consider the steps needed to move forward. We cannot simply wait for the new treaty to come and be the problem solver – we need to think now and act now.
- A general concern was present regarding whether the high food prices of today are here to stay. We need to think of how best to deal with these rising prices. If the prices are changing on a daily basis around the world, real-time steps are needed to alleviate this pressure.
- If quality land is needed from the onset, legislation needs to be in place to support this. Be it through strict residue levels or direct interference, support is needed to enable GM crops to continue to grow in the future.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Perspective of the Slovenian Presidency

Branko RAVNIK, Director General,
Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture

Agriculture can efficiently respond to challenges of modern time only when it is developing according to sustainability principles – coordinated consideration of agricultural market, environmental care and efforts for social equilibrium. Public attitude towards the role and meaning of agriculture has been changing and has an important role in directing the agricultural policy. A stable agricultural policy is the foundation of successful development of agriculture. The agriculture policy needs to successfully respond to the new challenges and

highlight the solutions and measures that will support agriculture.

Perspective of the European Commission

Daniele BIANCHI, Member of
Commissioner FISCHER-BOEL's Cabinet

Agriculture is currently a scapegoat. The protectionist measures occurring show the effects of a storm from a reaction – this has to be rectified. In the short term, CAP is the answer. In the long term, more must be done. The markets should be trusted and the farmers must increase productivity to respond to demand. The last reform clearly favored market orientation but farmers must be able to react to market signals. What happens after 2013 should be based on the two pillars interlined – not separately like today.

Perspective of the Member States

Corrado Pirzio-Biroli on behalf of **Paolo de CASTRO**, Italian Minister of Agriculture

The farming business is viable and farmers must be empowered to respond to the market. Land managers do much more than just provide food and feed. They should not be expected to cross-subsidize public goods. Unless policy objectives are agreed, budgetary plans should not be decided.

Discussion Points

- Arable prices are very important but the livestock market must also be taken into consideration. Grazing for livestock must be discussed and ranked as a priority.

(Speeches are available in full on request)

About the conference organizers

About ELO

The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 27 EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit making, ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. ELO aims at promoting a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels. Information can be found on www.elo.org

About Syngenta

Syngenta is a world-leading agribusiness committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology. The company is a leader in crop protection, and ranks third in the high-value commercial seeds market. Sales in 2007 were approximately \$9.2 billion. Syngenta employs over 21,000 people in more than 90 countries. Syngenta is listed on the Swiss stock exchange (SYNN) and in New York (SYT). Further information is available at www.syngenta.com



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