

15 September 2009

Press Release

COPA AND COGECA EMPHASISE POSITIVE ROLE AGRICULTURE CAN PLAY IN COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE BUT CALL FOR SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE

Copa and Cogeca emphasised the positive role that agriculture can play in tackling climate change at EU Farm Ministers informal meeting in Vaxjo, Sweden, today, but stressed that a strong Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with sufficient incentives, is vital in order to achieve this.

The projected climate changes over the next 50 years will adversely affect crop yields, livestock management and location of production, threatening farm incomes and causing land abandonment in some parts of Europe. Padraig Walshe, President of Copa, consequently outlined in Vaxjo some concrete ideas as to how agriculture can both adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change. "For example, if we can introduce new crops more resilient to water scarcity or wet conditions, we will, at the same time, contribute to reducing green house gas emissions through the more efficient use of energy intensive inputs such as fertilisers". "European agriculture can also provide alternatives to fossil fuels and oil-derived products. It can sequester carbon in soils and biomass and can enhance the resilience of the ecosystem", he added.

Furthermore, Mr. Walshe warned that without the right policies in place, climate change is likely to lead to lower yields and thus lower production and employment as well as much greater volatility in food supplies and prices. This will be particularly catastrophic at a time when Europe needs to increase production significantly in order to meet growing world food demand. He consequently urged EU politicians to ensure that there is a strong CAP in the future, which provides the right tools and incentives to ensure that farmers can play their role in addressing this challenge. "Farmers have already suffered enough with the recent crises in the EU cereals, dairy and pigmeat sectors and they do not have sufficient income to sustain investments in this at the moment. Farmers must have sufficient funds in order to enable them to invest to meet the challenge of climate change", he insisted.

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