



Agricultural Markets Task Force Presents Recommendations on farmers in the food supply chain

Brussels, 14 November 2016

The Commission will consider the report's recommendations and an appropriate policy response in line with its continuous support to the agricultural sector.

The Agricultural Markets Task Force (AMTF), chaired by former Dutch Minister for Agriculture and University Professor, Cees Veerman, today presented its report to EU Commissioner for Agriculture & Rural Development, Phil **Hogan**.

The establishment of the Task Force, made up of twelve independent experts, reflected increased concern regarding global developments in the food supply chain and, in particular, the position of the producer in that chain. The Task Force was asked, therefore, to discuss a number of relevant issues all with a view to improving the position of farmers in the food chain.

Accepting the report, that reflects the result of ten months work, Commissioner **Hogan** stated: *"In view of recent difficulties in some specific sectors, we identified the need to strengthen the role of the farmer in the food chain with the objective of ensuring that he/she gets a fair return for their produce. Strengthening the voice and position of the farmer is a major priority for me. The report of the Agricultural Markets Task Force is a very welcome addition to the debate on how to achieve this. We will now prioritise our consideration of the report and its recommendations with a view to delivering the appropriate policy response. The importance of the issue is already acknowledged in the Commission Work Programme for 2017 and today's report will play a key role in the delivery of this commitment."*

Amid concerns that farmers are bearing the brunt of price volatility and prolonged periods of low prices, the Task Force's report concludes that the policy framework governing the supply chain *"can and should be further improved."* Among the other conclusions, the report calls for new rules at EU level to cover certain **Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs)**, as well as the **implementation of effective enforcement regimes** in Member States such as through the use of an Adjudicator.

Other recommendations include increasing **market transparency, enhancing cooperation among farmers, facilitating farmers' access to finance** and **improving the take-up of risk management tools**. Specifically, the Task Force report recommended that:

- to improve **market transparency**, the introduction mandatory price reporting and the provision of more timely, more standardised data;
- as regards **UTPs**, while voluntary initiatives have been useful, they have fallen short of introducing effective and independent enforcement. **Framework legislation** should, therefore, be introduced at EU level as well as supporting effective enforcement regimes in Member States, such as through the use of an Adjudicator. There are also recommendations on mandatory written contracts, which would also benefit farmers;
- in terms of **enhancing cooperation among farmers**, the rules of collective organisation and competition law should be clear and workable, in order to genuinely enhance the opportunities for farmers to cooperate;
- to **facilitate farmers' access to finance**, there is potential from the greater use of Financial Instruments, in relation to which there is a role for the European Investment Bank (EIB), which could also be involved in the development of a possible export credit guarantee facility; and
- on the question of **risk management**, existing tools should be improved. Futures markets offer farmers a further tool, but more needs to be done in terms of raising awareness and training.

Established in January 2016, the AMTF also looked at a number of issues that will inform the debate about the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post-2020, underlining the challenges from those posed by the climate challenge as well as shortages of water and fossil energy. It refers to the importance of remunerating farmers for the provision of public goods and services. The report also suggests the possibility of introducing integrated risk management policy elements at EU level. Finally, it underlines the importance of research and innovation – and attracting new young farmers into the sector – in responding to the challenges ahead.

For more details, see [here](#).

IP/16/3658

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