



Towards a Common Agriculture and Food Policy 2013 within a food sovereignty framework

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1. Meeting European and global challenges

2009 has demonstrated the scale of the difficulties confronting European farmers. Milk is not the only sector undergoing a crisis, and agricultural incomes are falling almost everywhere. The current CAP as well as the WTO framework on which it is based have shown their inability to resolve problems; on the contrary, they have aggravated them: the number of farms is in steep decline, unemployment is rising rapidly, over one billion people are suffering from hunger, our planet is suffering from global warming, biodiversity is being lost, and there is a rapid increase in the health costs of the dominant modes of production and consumption.

In spite of this, the EU does not appear inclined to make changes to the neo-liberal policy that has globalised agriculture and food. Producers and consumers are the main losers, and the profits of agribusiness and large supermarket chains continue to increase. If the EU fails to take action, European agriculture will be endangered, and we shall find ourselves facing a social and environmental catastrophe. Without farmers, who will feed people? The failure of Copenhagen shows that governments are short-sighted. We, as European farmers need to find as many allies as possible in society to defend a new agriculture and food policy. 2010 should be the year for holding broad public discussions within the EU, in order to re-define agricultural and food policies from 2013 onwards, before the EU budget for this period is drawn up.

- **Ensure access to food for all people.** This is a global challenge both for now and in the decades to come¹. Small-scale sustainable farming is now recognised as providing the best possible response². Yet it has been overlooked by agricultural policies and the WTO that favour large scale global farms. The challenge is not technical, but one of access to agricultural production and access to food.
- **Respond to the challenge of employment: more farmers and rural communities to feed Europe.** With the sharp rise in unemployment, the EU cannot continue to do away with farms³ and rural employment. Maintaining and supporting the installation of farmers implies recognising the economic and social value of agriculture that has been lost in the current CAP.
- **Reduce global warming and save biodiversity.** The industrialisation of agricultural production and animal factory farms need to be stopped. Agricultural practices and production methods that are favourable to the climate and biodiversity exist: implementing them means breaking away from the current model.

¹ It is important to remember that the 40 million poor in Europe do not have enough to eat

² IAASTD report – <http://www.agassessment.org/>

³ Small-middle size farms are disappearing, but also big farms (dairy farms for ex)

2. How does food sovereignty meet these challenges?

Food sovereignty gives people and the EU the right to define their agricultural and food policy based on peoples' needs and their environment rather than according to the rules of international trade as laid down by "free" trade ideology. For example, it is up to the EU to outlaw growing or importing of GMOs if the EU citizens do not want them⁴, without the WTO having any say in the matter. It is the EU's responsibility to decide to shift from the current situation of a 75% deficit in vegetable protein used for animal feed to one of self-sufficiency. This is entirely possible, given the available farmland, and is also essential, given the environmental stakes. This means reconsidering the 1994 WTO agreement.

Food sovereignty sets the priority for agriculture to feed people first and foremost, rather than producing for international trade. The EU has become the greatest importer and leading exporter of food produce, and therefore needs to totally reconsider its priorities. Exporting milk powder while simultaneously importing soy to feed cows, growing fruit and vegetables - even if they are organic - in the countries of the South because labour costs are lower there, all lead to the current social and environmental failures. Food sovereignty, on the other hand, relocalises agricultural production close to where consumers live.

Food sovereignty, by allowing farmers to play a central role in feeding people in their region, provides them with a sense of social legitimacy that has often been lost through the current CAP. Food sovereignty is opposed to the current concentration of « food power » that lies in the hands of agribusiness and supermarket chains. It is the duty of political powers such as the EU, for example, to regulate production, markets, and distribution, and to take all the actors in the food chain into consideration. It is also up to producers and consumers, as is increasingly the case, to shorten the chain through a variety of forms of direct sales. They should be encouraged to do this by the agricultural and food policy (CAFP) and safety standards for products processed on the farm – now industrial standards - should be adapted.

But make no mistake: food sovereignty does not mean autarky or nor a retreat behind borders. Nor is it opposed to international trade: all regions of the world have their own specific produce that they can trade; but food security is far too important to allow it to depend on importation. In all regions of the world, the basic food should be produced locally where possible. All regions should therefore have the right to protect themselves against low-cost imports that destroy their home production.

Food sovereignty not only confers rights, it also implies a duty to not damage agricultural or food economy in other regions of the world. All forms of dumping, i.e. all grants that allow exporting products at a lower price than the production cost⁵ should be forbidden. This holds true for export subsidies, and also for single payments scheme if they allow selling and exporting at prices below the cost of production.

Food sovereignty is aimed not only at feeding today's population but also feeding future generations, and therefore at the preservation of natural resources and the environment. This is why we need to develop modes of production which decrease agricultural emissions of greenhouse gases and benefit biodiversity and health. By cutting down on transport and shifting away from over intensive agriculture, we are dealing with the environmental and climate challenges.

Food sovereignty can provide a meeting point for all those in Europe who are working to change agricultural and food policies and those who are working for the relocalisation of food. This is the dynamic that can add weight to the orientations of the future agricultural policy.

⁴ GMOs have no use and are a danger to biodiversity and health, particularly through the pesticides associated with them

⁵ In contrast to the definition of the WTO/OECD, for whom dumping means exporting at a price that is lower than the price in the exporting country, a policy which has justified the lowering of agricultural prices within the EU since 1992. Export subsidies have been replaced by decoupled payments, which are untouchable in the eyes of the WTO !!

3. A new CAP that overcomes current dead-ends⁶

Our objectives:

- to maintain and develop small-scale ,sustainable, social farming which feeds people and cares for the environment, health and living rural landscapes. For this, farmers should be able to make a decent living from the sale of their agricultural produce, based on stable, fair prices. This is a prerequisite for economic recognition and making farming appear attractive to young people.
- public support should be aimed at modes of production and farms which take care of employment and environment
- to relocalise food as much as possible and put an end to the stranglehold of big retailers and industry on the food chain

Our priorities:

1. **farm income, prices:** Fair, stable farm prices imply:

- Supply management and regulation of agricultural markets, and instruments that create transparency throughout the food chain and limit the profit margins of processing industry and distribution. In order to deal with possible surpluses in specific climatic situations, minimum farm prices should be established.
- The right to protect against low-cost imports, including animal feed, a right which is linked to ending export dumping practices in all its current forms⁷. The variable level of tariffs must be linked to European production costs⁸.
- Direct payments with an upper limit determined by the number of people actively working on the farm awarded on one hand to small-scale sustainable farms whose production and social and environmental role is recognised⁹, and on the other hand to sustainable farms in less-favoured agro-climatic areas where production costs are higher than in the above referenced.
- Agricultural workers, European or migrant, have the same rights. Member States are obliged to fix minimum wages.

2. **environment:** norms are established for all farms involving less use of energy, chemical inputs and water, and fewer carbon emissions, and that support biodiversity and health. Farms that go beyond these norms at environmental and social level (organic family farms for example) or which use agronomic practices that increase the level of organic matter present in the soil, which captures carbon and supports long-term fertility, are promoted and supported. Research and training are orientated in this direction.

⁶ Concepts linked to the WTO framework such as decoupling, first/second pillar...cease to exist

⁷ Export subsidies and also direct grants from the 1st & 2nd pillar when products are exported

⁸ Level to be discussed: production cost of most favoured area, average level, median level...?

⁹ Criteria to be defined by each Member State

3. **the set-up of farms and access to land** are facilitated through European and national measures that will allow many young people to become farmers. Concentration of ownership and urban sprawling onto agricultural land to be banned.
4. A policy for **rural development** that completes the previous measures is established. This prioritises rural employment, local trade and proximity services, and provides a good geographical re-balancing of production,
5. The current regulations governing **international agricultural trade**¹⁰ are questioned. The WTO Doha Round and the “free” trade agreements of the EU with third countries are abandoned. A new global food governance, with new rules for international trade, based on food sovereignty and the right to food, is introduced.
6. Production and import of **GMOs** for agriculture and food production are banned. All Patents on life are also removed. The use, exchange and reproduction of farmer’s seeds should be promoted.
7. The EU puts an end to public support for the use and growing of industrial agrofuels. The energy assessment for European agrofuels is a net negative and internationally they enter into competition with agricultural lands dedicated to food production and forests. However, the energy independence of farms can be increased by using pure pressed oil made from oil-seed crops grown on one's own or neighbour’s farm.



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