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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

**on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 814/2000
on information measures relating to the common agricultural policy**

{SEC(2011) 622 final}

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report concerns the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 for the period 2009–2010.

The objectives of the information measures on the CAP as defined by Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 are:

- helping to explain the CAP as well as to implement and develop it,
- promoting the European Model of Agriculture and helping people understand it,
- providing information for farmers and others living in rural areas,
- raising public awareness of the issues and objectives of the CAP.

Actions fall into two main categories:

- those submitted by third party organisations for co-financing by EAGF (grants),
- those at the initiative of the Commission and financed at a rate of 100% by EAGF ("direct actions").

It was decided by the Council (Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 814/2000) that a report on the implementation of the Regulation should be presented to the European Parliament and the Council every two years. This is the fourth such report. The first report covering the period 2000–2002 was presented in May 2003¹. The second report on the 2003-2006 period appeared in June 2007². The third report covering 2007-2008 was presented in May 2009.³

The annexes mentioned in the text are to be found in the accompanying Commission Staff Working Paper.

¹ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 on information measures relating to the common agricultural policy (COM(2003)235 final of 8.5.2003)

² Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 on information measures relating to the common agricultural policy (COM(2007)324 final of 13.6.2007)

³ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 on information measures relating to the common agricultural policy (COM(2009)237 final of 20.5.2009)

II. BUDGET

The budget made available for information measures under budget line 05 08 06 was increased from €7 million in 2008 to €8 million for 2009 and €8 million 2010. The breakdown between actions to be taken at the initiative of the Commission and actions to be co-financed (grants) was as follows:

2009: direct actions (€4.750.000) (59%) – grants (€3.250.000) (41%)

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Execution of the budget, in terms of commitments, reached 95% for 2009 and 88% for 2010.

III. BREAKDOWN OF ACTIONS FINANCED

Within the European Commission's communication policy to improve the understanding of the citizens about the EU, DG Agriculture and Rural Development pursued and intensified its efforts in the reporting period to design and implement actions targeting the general public and relevant stakeholders. The annual call for proposals for co-financed measures encouraged information actions having maximum impact in terms of reaching the widest possible audience⁴. Overall, efforts continued to identify the needs of specific target groups, to better define appropriate messages, information actions and dissemination strategies, as well as evaluation and feedback, so as to achieve the objectives of the Regulation.

1. Grants (communication actions taken at the initiative of third party organisations)

The Regulation envisages two kinds of measures, specific information measures and annual work programmes. A specific information measure means information events limited in time and space and implemented on the basis of a single budget. An annual work programme means sets of two to five specific information measures. For 2009 and 2010, it was decided (as in 2008) to retain only specific information measures for co-financing in the annual call for proposals for those years, with the aim of simplifying the grants scheme.

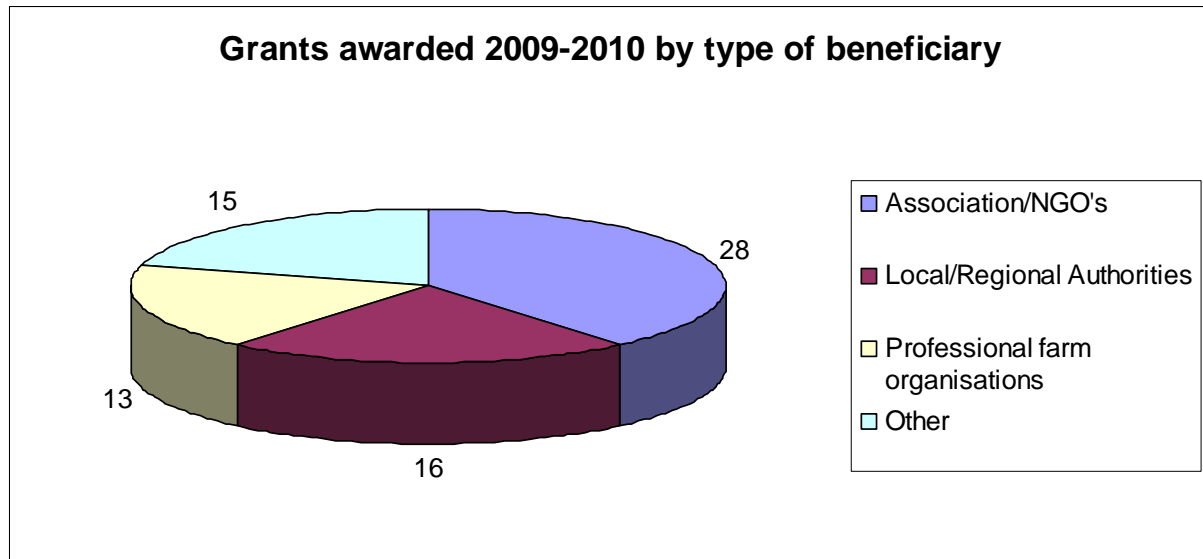
The maximum financing rate for the measures referred to above is 50% of eligible costs. However, the rate may be increased up to 75% in exceptional cases, as specified in the implementing Regulation, and defined in the call for proposals. In the reporting period, only 6 measures (out of a total of 72) were awarded more than 50%, 3 in 2009 and 3 in 2010. They were deemed of exceptional interest in line with the criteria laid down in the calls for proposals which stipulated that the project must be carried out in one of the EU12 Member States, be of high technical quality and cost-efficiency, its dissemination plan must be effective (in terms of guaranteeing the largest possible audience) and it must have received a score of minimum 75/100 by the Evaluation Committee for the award criteria.

Under the 2009 call for proposals, 37 specific actions were co-financed. In 2010, 35 specific actions were co-financed, making an overall total of 72 actions for the two years. Grants were awarded for 41 information campaigns, 17 conferences and seminars, 7 audiovisual productions, 2 participations in fairs, 1 study visit project and 4 projects in schools.

⁴ OJ C 248, 30.9.2008, p. 8 ; OJ C 215, 9.9.2009, p.3

In 2009/2010, the rise in the number of information campaigns reflected the emphasis in the calls for proposals on co-financed actions with high-added value, where a number of information measures could be combined to achieve maximum impact.

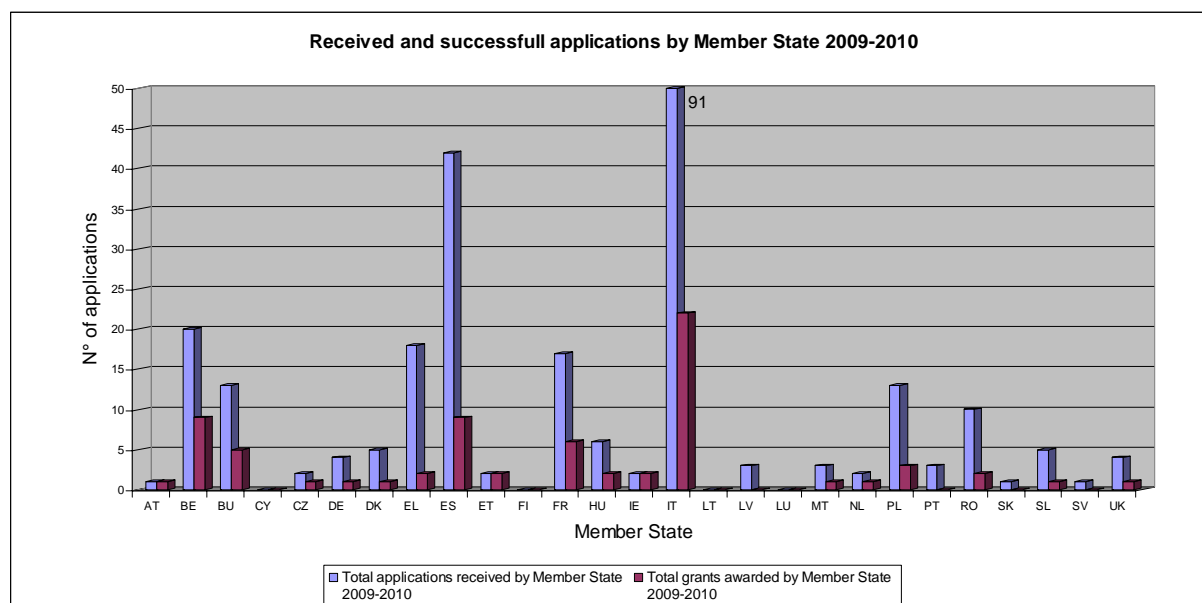
The types of grants beneficiaries were as follows: professional farm organisations (13), non-governmental organisations/associations (28), regional and local authorities (16) and others (15).



Associations and NGOs active in agriculture and rural development at national level (often members of EU level bodies) figured prominently among the lists of beneficiaries. In addition, inter alia, regional bodies, and media organisations participated and also, but to a lesser extent than previously, EU level socio-professional organisations. In a part of the co-financed actions, beneficiaries made use of the possibility to involve further organisations as partners in the execution of the projects.

The table below indicates the number of received and successful applications by Member State.

Table I



Annex 1 gives an overview of grants in the reporting period. Details on individual grants are to be found on the Europa website:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants/capinfo/index_en.htm

As in the past, the calls for proposals encouraged better definition of target audiences and better dissemination of information. Applicants were required to submit a media plan for their proposed projects, including details of project implementation, message delivery and measurement of effectiveness. In the reporting period, it is important to emphasise that, as in the past, a considerable number of co-financed actions reached a wider audience beyond the immediate participants, thanks to the multiplier effect of the specialised press and media, as well as increased use of the internet as a dissemination tool.

In the reporting period, there continued as in the past to be a strong level of interest from the southern part of the EU. It should be pointed out also that the number of grant applications from the EU12 continued to increase in 2009/2010.

2. Communication actions taken at the initiative of the Commission

In 2009–2010, as in the previous period, an important number of actions were financed at the initiative of the Commission. These were carried out often with external technical assistance. Some 59% of the budget was earmarked for these measures in the reporting period.

Annex II details all communication initiatives by the Commission in 2009–2010 as well as the respective costs.

Conferences

In 2009-2010, there continued to be close cooperation with the Member States, the European Parliament, other Commission departments, as well as the civil society sector, concerning the organisation of conferences.

Conferences continued to provide a forum for broad consultation and dialogue on EU policy issues. For example, in June 2009, an important conference on enlargement took place in Croatia. In March 2010, the conference "What future for Milk?" brought together in Brussels all interested parties (including farmers, producers, processors, distributors, academic experts) and made an important contribution to the ongoing reflections on the dairy sector at EU level. In April 2010, journalists from around the world were invited via the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) to a conference/dialogue in Brussels on the future direction of the CAP; this helped raise awareness of policy issues both within the EU and in third countries.

The conference "CAP post-2013" in July 2010 marked an important stage in the debate on the future of the CAP.

The use of web streaming technology ensured broad dissemination of conference proceedings.

Participation/stands at fairs

Concerning the organisation of fairs in 2009-2010, the focus remained on underlining the benefits of farming and rural development for society as a whole. Best practice examples of EU policy in rural areas, protection of the rural heritage, quality policy, and meeting new challenges such as climate change were highlighted. Fairs also continued to provide a forum for dialogue on farming policy with farmers, other stakeholders and the general public. As in the past, special events were designed for schoolchildren including on the theme of promoting better nutrition, and linked to the promotion of schemes for milk and fruit and vegetables in schools.

Publications

Publications continued to reflect the legislative programme as well as the latest Eurobarometer surveys on communication needs. Brochures highlighted the importance within the CAP of issues such as sustainability, biofuels and quality policy, and further development of publications for the general public took place. In 2009 and 2010, DG Agriculture and Rural Development also participated in the *EUROPA* diary exercise by Commission services, aimed at raising awareness of 15-18 year old school students on EU issues, including agriculture. In the reporting period, there continued to be a strong focus on the further development of publications in electronic format, and also increased use of the information relay network of the European Commission to distribute publications aimed at the general public.

Website

The "Agriculture and Rural Development" website continued to develop in the reporting period, notably as an important source of specialist information on the CAP and Rural Development. It also played a significant role in the process of consulting stakeholders and the general public as to the future direction of agricultural policy. Two on-line consultations were undertaken (a public consultation on the CAP after 2013, and a more specialized one for the Impact Assessment on the options outlined in the Communication "The CAP towards 2020: meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future"). The views expressed have been taken into consideration in the on-going reflections concerning the preparation of legislative proposals on the future of farm and rural development policy in the EU.

In 2009 and 2010, dedicated web pages were created for major DG AGRI policy initiatives such as the preparations for the CAP post 2013, the improvement of EU agricultural quality policy and the milk package proposals.

Subscriptions to the "Monitoring Agri-trade Policy (MAP)" newsletter and briefs have risen to 4900, the "Agricultural commodity and food prices" updates have now roughly 1000 and the new "Agricultural Policy Perspectives" briefs about 900 subscribers.

The migration to an all new version of the website (new design, web content management technology and updated content) is well underway.

Opinion Polls

In 2009, DG Agriculture again used the Eurobarometer quantitative survey to poll EU citizens' opinion on agriculture, the CAP and rural development. In addition, in 2010, a further qualitative study regarding the attitudes and level of knowledge of the general public

concerning agriculture and the CAP was carried out; this also included the farming community.

Visits

In the reporting period, the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development continued to receive groups of visitors, comprising principally farmers, farmers' representatives, students, regional and local representatives and academics. The purpose of the visits was to explain and deepen citizens' understanding of the common agricultural policy, including rural development. The initiative concerning dialogue with universities in the Member States continued.

Audiovisual

In the reporting period, audiovisual and media actions were developed to reach the general public. This included distribution, during three consecutive weeks in the winters of 2009 and 2010, of a short 40' film ("clip") on agriculture called "What tomorrow will be like?" in cinemas in the EU27. The aim was to highlight the importance of agriculture for society as a whole. It is estimated that more than 30 million admissions in cinemas of EU 27 were achieved for both distribution periods.

IV COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS ON MAJOR ISSUES

Reference has already been made to the broad public debate on the future of EU farm policy in April-June 2010. The aim was to generate the widest possible participation in the CAP reflection process at an early stage in the debate. This provided an opportunity for an open dialogue where the CAP was discussed by the general public, stakeholders, think tanks and academic bodies. This forum generated some 5,600 contributions from all over the EU

Subsequently, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development hosted a conference on this public debate in Brussels on 19/20 July. This marked an important stage in the process of preparing the Commission's Communication of November 2010 on "The CAP towards 2020: meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future"⁵. In parallel, DG Agriculture and Rural Development organised an event designed for the general public on Place St Catherine in Brussels, where Member States displayed food and beverages from all over the EU, underlining the richness and variety of European farm production. The occasion was also used for announcing and granting the award for the new organic farming logo design.

The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions contributed to the public debate by issuing own- initiative opinions.

Subsequently the adoption by the Commission of the Communication was marked by wide-ranging information activities in the EU27 organised by DG Agriculture and Rural Development. These included presentations to stakeholders in all Member States. These briefings were attended by more than 1300 stakeholders representing a wide range of socio-professional organisations, NGOs, regional and national governments and institutions. Special media and press materials in all EU languages, as well as on-line material accompanied this

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, The CAP towards 2020: meeting the food natural resources and territorial challenges of the future".COM(2010) 672 final of 18 November 2010

exercise, including the production and dissemination of audiovisual material. It is estimated this exercise reached some 40 million TV viewers across the EU with a significant impact also in terms of the print media. As with past DG AGRI initiatives on major policy issues, this represented an important exercise in communication at local level with all interested parties, including by definition, the general public.

In the reporting period, in addition, two communication campaigns, 'Drink it up' and 'The Tasty Bunch' were conducted as part of the awareness raising activities linked to the School Milk Scheme and the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, reflecting the Commission's efforts to improve health and nutrition, as set out in the White Paper on " a Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues"⁶.

⁶ COM (2007) 279 final, 30.5.2007.

V. THE PROPORTION OF SPENDING (COMMITMENTS AND PAYMENTS) BETWEEN GRANTS AT THE INITIATIVE OF THIRD PARTIES AND INFORMATION ACTIONS AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE COMMISSION

| | 2008 | | 2009 | | 2010 | |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| | Grants | Direct actions | Grants | Direct actions | Grants | Direct actions |
| Budget foreseen | 3.000.000 | 4.000.000 | 3.250.000 | 4.750.000 | 3.250.000 | 4.750.000 |
| Commitments) EURO | 2.532.768 | 3.860.889 | 2.833.990 | 4.745.654 | 2.740.497 | 4.280.963 |
| % of consumption | 84% | 97 % | 87% | 99,9% | 84% | 90% |
| Payments (EUR)(**) | 1.499.066 | 3.069.402 | 1.848.458 | 4.320.404 | (*) | (*) |

(*) Figures not yet available – most of the actions are still on going.

(**) The payments mentioned in the table do not represent the execution of the year N, but they are the payments done in relation to the commitments of the year N. Those payments regroup the payments made in year N and year N+1.

It is to be noted that the payments are always lower than the amounts originally committed. In the case of grants, this can be explained by the fact that firstly, in many cases, final costs of the actions are lower than initially foreseen by the beneficiary, and secondly, because not all expenses declared by the beneficiaries can be considered as eligible. In the case of actions at the initiative of the Commission, the differences are smaller and due to the commitments, which take account of all possible foreseeable expenditure which are sometimes finally lower than initially foreseen.

VI CONCLUSION

In the 2009-2010 period, efforts continued to raise awareness of the CAP among the general public and also to maintain and increase support from stakeholders in agriculture and the rural areas. There was a special emphasis on engaging with the general public on the future of EU agricultural policy post 2013 and on encouraging an exchange of views with interested parties.

Initiatives targeting the general public and younger audiences using the internet and audiovisual tools intensified. The effort to ensure maximum impact of information measures both for co-financed actions and actions taken at the initiative of the Commission continued. Overall, this contributed to raising public awareness of the issues and objectives of the CAP and providing information for farmers and others living in rural areas in line with the objectives of Regulation 814/2000.

In the course of 2010, DG Agriculture and Rural Development carried out a detailed analysis of its communication activities during recent years. As a result, its communication strategy was reviewed and updated to respond to the communication challenges and political priorities for the period 2010-2015. The focus will continue to be on the future of the CAP and the aim is to further improve the effectiveness of our communication actions and synergy with our governmental and non-governmental partners, while taking into account technological change and the emergence of the new media.