

# School Fruit Scheme

2008/0146(CNS) - 07/10/2008

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development adopted a report drafted by Niels **BUSK** (ADLE, DK), and amended the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 1290/2005 on the financing of the common agricultural policy and (EC) No 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation) in order to set up a School Fruit Scheme.

The main amendments – adopted in the framework of the consultation procedure – are as follows:

**Processed fruit and vegetable:** processed fruit and vegetable products are of lesser nutritional value and should be excluded from this Regulation. In view of the objective of achieving healthier eating for Europe's children, only the free distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables should be supported, selected by the Commission, to be determined in more detail by Member States.

**Selection criteria:** the Commission and Member States shall select vegetables and fruit, which shall be as fresh as possible, seasonal, and obtainable at low cost, on the basis of health criteria, such as the fewest possible unnatural and unhealthy additives. Local products should be used as a matter of priority in order to avoid needless transport and the resulting environmental pollution. Organic and local fruit and vegetables shall, if available, be given particular consideration.

**Budget:** the Commission had proposed an allocation of EUR 90 million per school year. Members note that this corresponds to one piece of fruit one day a week for 30 weeks per year and covers children aged 6 to 10 years. They consider that there must be a far greater allocation of funds. A school fruit scheme should consist of a portion of fruit per pupil per day and not only be aimed at school children aged 6 to 10 years, as the Commission proposes, but also at pre-school children. The Community contribution should be EUR 500 million per school year.

**Strategy:** Member States wishing to participate in the scheme shall draw up a prior strategy for its implementation, taking account of the soil and climate conditions under which fruit and vegetables are produced. In this connection, Community preference shall apply to the products concerned. Member States shall determine, inter alia: (a) the products to be distributed, taking account of the fact that seasonal and local products are concerned; (b) the age groups of the beneficiary school population; (c) the schools participating in the Scheme.

**Accompanying measures:** these shall include the provision of health and dietary advice, information on the health benefits of fruit, appropriate to the age of the students, as well as information on the particular characteristics of organic farming. They should give priority to pre-school and primary-school children, to whom fruit should be distributed free of charge on a daily basis.

**Report:** the evaluation report must examine: (a) the extent to which opting for national cofinancing, by means of a parental contribution, has or has not influenced the outreach and effectiveness of the scheme; (b) the relevance and impact of national accompanying measures, in particular the way in which the School Fresh Fruit Scheme and accompanying information on a healthy diet are incorporated into the national curriculum.

Lastly, a new recital states that the School Fresh Fruit Scheme should be clearly identified as an EU initiative aimed at combating obesity in young people and developing their sense of taste. It should also serve to make children aware of the changing seasons in the course of a year. To that end, education

authorities should, as a matter of priority, distribute seasonal fruit, giving preference to a varied range of fruits so as to enable children to discover different tastes.