Common agricultural policy CAP: information measures (Regulation (EC) No 1258/99)

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The Commission presents a report concerning the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 814 /2000 for the period 2009–2010. It is recalled that 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").

Budget: the budget made available for information measures under budget line 05 08 06 was increased from EUR 7 million in 2008 to **EUR 8 million for 2009 and EUR 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 (EUR 4 750 000) (59%) – grants (EUR 3 250 000) (41%)
- **2010:** direct actions (EUR 4 750 000) (59%) – grants (EUR 3 250 000) (41%)

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

Grants (communication actions taken at the initiative of third party organisations): whilst the Regulation envisages two kinds of measures, specific information measures and annual work programmes, 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 is 50% of eligible costs. However, the rate may be increased up to 75% in exceptional cases. In the reporting period, only 6 measures (out of a total of 72) were awarded more than 50%, since they were deemed of exceptional interest. 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.

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), nongovernmental organisations/associations (28), regional and local authorities (16) and others (15).

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.

Communication actions taken at the initiative of the Commission: the report gives details of these actions, which include conferences, stands at fairs, publications and web developments. It also discusses communications campaigns on major issues, with particular reference to the broad public debate on the

future of EU farm policy, which 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 "(COM(2010) 672).

The Commission notes that 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. 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 (EC) 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.