Common organisation of the markets in agricultural products 2014-2020. Single CMO Regulation

2011/0281(COD) - 17/12/2019 - Follow-up document

In accordance with Article 225(a) of the common organisation of markets Regulation, the Commission presented its seventh report on the implementation of apiculture programmes.

This report covers apiculture years 2017-2019, corresponding to the time period 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2019. These are the first apiculture years where new measures applied. It includes information received in relation to previous apiculture years, as well as programmes planned for apiculture years 2020-2022, notified to the Commission by 15 March 2019.

General overview

There are approximately 17.5 million hives in the EU, managed by 650 000 beekeepers. The number of beekeepers has increased compared with the notification received in 2016 for the 2017-19 programmes. The apiculture sector produced 280 000 tonnes of honey in 2018, making the EU the second largest honey producer after China (550 000 tonnes). In 2018, the rate of self-sufficiency was around 60%, which is roughly at the same levels as in 2015. In 2018, the EU imported 208 000 tonnes of honey with a total value of EUR 452 million.

Prices for honey vary greatly between Member States, quality and point of sale. The EU average price for multi-floral honey at site of production in 2018 was EUR 6.46/kg.

Objectives and measures of the apiculture programmes

The programmes for apiculture years 2020-2022, and their financing, were approved through Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/974. The objective of the programmes is to improve the general conditions for producing and marketing apiculture products in the Union.

The 2013 CAP reform introduced some changes to the programmes. The main objectives of these changes were to adapt eligible measures to the needs of the sector, and to ensure a sounder allocation of the EU budget by improving the methods used by the Member States to determine the number of beehives on their territories. The resulting eligible measures are further described below:

- technical assistance to beekeepers and beekeepers' organisations;

- combating beehive invaders and diseases, particularly varroasis;

- rationalisation of transhumance;

- measures to support laboratories for the analysis of apiculture products with the aim of helping beekeepers to market and increase the value of their products;

- restocking of beehives;

- cooperation with specialised bodies for the implementation of applied research programmes in the field of beekeeping and apiculture products;

- market monitoring;

- enhancement of product quality with a view to exploiting the potential of products on the market.

EU budget

Union funds dedicated to the apiculture sector are relatively small but increased from EUR 36 million per year for the 2017-2019 apiculture programmes to EUR 40 million per year for the 2020-2022 apiculture programmes. The Union contribution to apiculture programmes corresponds to 50% of the expenditure borne by the Member States. In concrete terms, it means that for the 2017 and 2018 apiculture years, EUR 72 million in total were available for the apiculture programmes each year. Although the funding was not fully utilised, the usage rate is high.

In 2018, as in previous years, the two measures technical assistance and combating beehive invaders receive most of the available funding, or close to 60% combined. Also as in previous years, the two measures restocking of beehives and rationalisation of transhumance rank as the third and fourth most popular measures, accounting for more than 30% combined. Applied research and analysis of honey remained at the 5th and 6th place, receiving 3.48% respectively 2.45% of the available funding in 2018. The two new measures, product improvement (0.69% of the total expenditure) and market monitoring together received less than 1% of the funding.

Determining the number of beehives

A total of 17 Member States are using mandatory methods for counting beehives including the Member States with the highest number of hives, such as ES, RO, IT, FR and EL. The mandatory methods may include the obligatory registration of beekeepers and/or beehives in a specific register, set up for that specific purpose, or the use of data from other mandatory registers such as veterinary information systems. A total of 11 Member States are instead using other methods than mandatory registration. These include Member States with fewer beehives, such as SE, DK, IE and EE. These Member States may rely on information received from beekeepers´ organisations, surveys, censuses, or a combination of these methods.

Future apiculture sector

In its proposal for a CAP beyond 2020, the Commission proposes to move the apiculture programmes from the Common Market Organisation Regulation to the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation. The proposal also includes an increase of the funding of the apiculture programmes, to EUR 60 million per year. This means that over the 7-year period of the future CAP, Union funding together with the Member States´ contributions, a total of EUR 840 million is available for the sector. While the apiculture programmes were voluntary under the CMO, the Commission proposes that they become mandatory in the Member States' CAP strategic plans.

Conclusion

The report concluded that although the apiculture programmes have remained voluntary under the CMO, all Member States continue to introduce the programmes, developed in cooperation with the sector. The programmes vary between Member States, depending on the needs of that particular Member State, but the measures receiving most of the support - technical assistance and combating beehive invaders - have remained unchanged since the last report in 2016. The funding to the sector has continued to increase over

the last programming periods. The number of beehives is one indicator of the impact of the support measure and this number continues to increase. However, looking at the overall profitability of the sector, EU average prices have not increased, while production costs are increasing and import prices decreasing. This poses challenges for the sector and indicates a continued need for support, also considering the important role of bees for the environment and agriculture.