

Improvement of the Community production of apples, pears, peaches and nectarines

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The Commission adopted the report by Mr Klaus REHDER (PSE, D) on the proposal for a Council Regulation on the improvement of the Community production of apples, pears, peaches and nectarines. This proposal was aimed at reducing surpluses on the Community market and adjusting supply to demand. Since 1990, a whole range of measures had been implemented to achieve this, and the Commission's proposal provided for the grubbing-up of 10 000 hectares of apple and pear orchards, as well as 10 000 hectares of nectarine and peach orchards. The total grubbing-up areas should be divided up between Member States 'on the basis of the orchard area, production and withdrawals of each Member State'. To make the optimum use of Community funds and to prevent "'handout effects" and the misuse of tax revenue', the premium would be granted 'subject to a written undertaking by the recipient ..., the grubbed-up area being at least 0.5 hectares'. The rapporteur also proposed that only orchards of more than 300 trees per hectare should be eligible for the grubbing-up premium. Although approving this draft regulation, the rapporteur asked that a minimum and maximum age for trees to be grubbed up be set for each Member State, so that trees which were too young or too old were not removed in order to receive the premium. He also pointed out that it was necessary 'to allow the Member States to decide on the regions and conditions under which this operation shall apply so that its introduction does not disturb measures to preserve or restore the ecological balance and stabilize farm incomes'.