

Support schemes for agriculture: energy crops scheme, single area payment scheme

2006/0172(CNS) - 20/11/2006

On the basis of the text prepared by the Presidency, the Council held a policy debate on a proposal for a Regulation amending and correcting Regulation 1782/2003/EC and amending Regulation 1698/2005/EC.

The Council generally welcomed the Presidency text setting out a number of additional adjustments aimed at simplifying certain parts of Regulation 1782/2003/EC. It instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to finalise the text on the basis of the political guidance provided by ministers, in order to enable the Council to adopt the proposal at its meeting on 19-21 December.

The debate by ministers focused in particular on the following issues:

- further extension of the SAPS until 2013;
- possibility of phasing-in statutory cross-compliance requirements for the new Member States applying the SAPS;
- possible abolition of the 10-month rule during which the land parcels are at the farmer's disposal and are eligible for the Single Payment Scheme under Article 44(3) of the Regulation;
- possibility of reducing the three-year period after which unused payment entitlements are allocated to the national reserve under Article 45 of the Regulation.

In addition, several delegations asked the Commission to provide for the possibility of national aid

to top up the energy crops premium. Some other delegations, on the contrary, expressed misgivings

about national aid with regard to energy crops.

In response to Member States' comments, the Commission stated that a possible extension of the SAPS beyond 2010 and the additional adjustments suggested by the Member States could be discussed during the 2008 CAP health check. As regards the future application of cross-compliance in the new Member States and the possible abolition of the 10-month rule, the Commissioner said that this issue could already be addressed next year, within a more general discussion on cross-compliance scheduled under the forthcoming German Presidency.