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Press Release

Copa-Cogeca welcomes EU Commission move to take action to help alleviate crisis hitting peaches and nectarine sector but calls for stronger measures

Copa-Cogeca welcomed today the European Commission move to introduce measures to help alleviate the crisis hitting the EU peaches and nectarine sector, but stressed that the action must be stronger with additional funds to finance these measures.

Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said "The sector is in serious crisis, seeing prices drop by between 30% to 50% to below production costs. I welcome the Commission move to introduce support measures for these sectors by increasing the volumes of fruit eligible for withdrawal operations and for free distribution of the fruit that has been withdrawn to for example charities. These markets have been badly hit by poor weather conditions. But Copa-Cogeca believes that the level of withdrawals must be higher and that the Commission must ensure that additional funds are available for the exceptional market withdrawals, financed outside of the operational funds for a limited time period and open to all producers, otherwise they will be forced out of business".

The measures proposed are to increase from 5% to 10% the production of Producer Organisations (POs) that may be withdrawn for free distribution. Secondly, exceptional support measures will also be made available to non-members of POs (paid at 50% of the PO withdrawal price). In this way, the measures will also be available to individual growers, provided the necessary controls are in place. Finally, extra funds will be provided for promotion, under the promotion actions in Producer Organisation operational programmes (under the usual co-financing arrangements). The formal decision will be taken in the coming weeks, but it will apply retro-actively as from today.

He continued "On top of this, producers are being hard hit by the retaliatory action imposed by Russia which includes a ban on European fruit exports, causing further price drops. We urge the Commission and governments to take action. It is unacceptable that the EU agriculture sector is being targeted again and bearing the burden of the Crimean/Ukraine/Russian crisis".

The market needs to be monitored closely and also the abusive and unfair trading practices need to be surveyed more closely to prevent a further deterioration in prices. we need a collaborative approach between all representatives in the food chain to avoid food losses as its a perishable product and ensure adequate incomes.

For further information, please contact:

Dominique Dejonckheere

Senior Policy Advisor

Tel.: +32 2 287 27 30

Dominique.dejonckheere@copa-cogeca.eu

Amanda Cheesley

Press Officer

Mobile: + 32 474 840 836

amanda.cheesley@copa-cogeca.eu

CDP(14)6068:1
