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Press Release

COPA-COGECA URGES EU FARM MINISTERS AND COMMISSIONER CIOLOS TO TAKE FURTHER MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE PRESSURE ON PRODUCERS HIT BY RUSSIAN BAN ON FARM EXPORTS

Copa-Cogeca called on EU Farm Ministers and the EU Commission today to urgently introduce additional measures to support EU farmers and cooperatives hit by the ban on EU farm exports to Russia worth 11 billion euros, warning it's a severe crisis.

In a high-level meeting with the Italian Presidency, Copa President Albert Jan Maat stressed "More measures are needed to help farmers and agri-cooperatives deal with this crisis situation. Prices in the EU fruit and vegetable and dairy sectors have plummeted by over 50% in some member states, since 29% of EU fruit and vegetable exports are normally sent to Russia and 33% of cheese exports. Action taken so far has helped to stabilize the EU dairy and fruit and vegetable markets but further measures are vital to prevent the markets from collapsing altogether".

Outlining key actions, Albert Jan Maat said "I urge the Commissioner to do everything in his power to encourage export promotion campaigns to stimulate new demand and find new market outlets for our produce. Red tape needs to be cut and non-tariff barriers to trade tackled. For example in the fruit and vegetable sector, phytosanitary barriers prevent the European fruit from entering the US market. This needs to be addressed. Ministers should also encourage the use of the EU school milk and fruit and vegetable schemes which help develop healthy eating habits at an early age. In addition, producers who don't belong to producer organisations (POs) must get the same amount of compensation for withdrawals as those belonging to producer organisations to ensure a level playing field. In view of the serious market situation, producers need to be enabled to better manage supplies on the market, by fully utilising article 222 of the EU regulation."

Outlining further actions, Cogeca President Christian Pees stressed "Measures taken so far to stabilise markets need to be expanded to limit the negative effects on the market. The list of dairy products eligible for temporary private storage aid should be enlarged and the period extended, as many products are simply not covered under current measures. The milk intervention price also must be updated urgently to take account of rising production costs. Furthermore, the list of fruit and vegetables eligible for withdrawal measures should be expanded to include for example citrus fruit and the quantities increased. The reference price must be updated so that it covers increasing production costs. The aid package worth 125 million euros for fruit and vegetable is not nearly enough to support the sector. Support must consequently not be financed only out of the CAP budget but also from other funds".

He continued "In addition, the EU pigmeat sector has been suffering for months by the ban and action must be taken to improve the situation, for example, by setting up promotion campaigns for pigmeat".

The move came as a new EU Commission paper on the Russian ban outlining measures to deal with the crisis was being debated by EU Farm Ministers.

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