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Press Release

Copa and Cogeca welcome as positive step some new extra measures agreed by EU Farm Ministers today but still not sufficient to solve bad situation hitting EU agricultural markets mainly as result of Russian export ban and unfair actions by retailers

Copa and Cogeca welcomed as a positive step some new extra measures agreed today by EU Farm Ministers in the EU aid package designed to help solve the bad situation on EU agricultural markets, but warned it still falls short of what is needed.

The move came as EU Farm Ministers discussed the issue at their informal meeting in Luxembourg. Speaking after the meeting, Copa President Albert Jan Maat said “I welcome as a positive step forward some new additional elements in the package but it still falls short of our expectations. In particular, I welcome the fact that farmers cash-flow problems will be helped by **advancing their direct payments** in Autumn. This must be done immediately. I also welcome the fact that a high level group to look at ensuring fair competition rules for producers and agri-cooperatives will be set up. I welcome the fact that **EU promotion programmes will be boosted**. It is important to have a strong export strategy and **export insurance** in the EU beef, pork and milk markets that could cover some of the trading risks. Priority must also be given to re-opening pigmeat and dairy trade with Russia ”, he said.

Cogeca President Christian Pees went on to underline the severe impact of the Russian export ban worth 5.5 billion euros on producers. He stressed the importance of agri-cooperatives in helping farmers to better market their produce and to get a better return for it. But he warned of the severe impact on producers of **unfair and abusive practices in the food chain**, saying that the EU Commission has failed to deliver on curbing these practices. It is time to put a solution in place that combines legislation with good codes of conduct (voluntary agreements) backed by an enforcement that gives credibility to the system”. He also warned that the EU Commission proposal for member states to use national funds under the de minimis rule is nothing new.

He insisted that the package includes very **few measures to help manage the market** or deal with the increasing volatility and short term problems. He underlined the need to have strong measures to deal with the volatility. In particular, he regreted the lack of measures in the **EU pigmeat and beef sectors**. The new private storage aid scheme for cheese and pigmeat in the package is a positive step but he regreted that the value of the **EU milk intervention prices** is not up for re-assessment to take account of rising input costs. He urged EU Ministers to look at increasing the milk intervention price to stop the downward pressure on the market. This is a priority. He pointed out that the enhanced private storage aid scheme for skimmed milk powder in the package may have some positive impact but it is not the same thing and it will not be enough to put a floor in the market to stop producer prices from collapsing”. Talks are set to continue on the issue and Copa and Cogeca will continue to fight for a good deal for European farmers and agri-cooperatives. **See here**

for details of aid allocation per member states: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/newsroom/223-qa_en.pdf #farmaction

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