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## Press Release

### **Copa and Cogeca launch new EU action plan to secure viable future for beef producers**

Up against increasing challenges, Copa and Cogeca launched in Brussels today a new EU action plan to secure a viable future for EU beef producers .

The move came at a high-level press event and reception hosted by Belgian Agriculture Minister Denis Ducarne and attended by EU Farm Commissioner Phil Hogan and Agriculture Ministers from France, Finland, Portugal, Poland, Croatia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Luxembourg and the regional Belgian Ministers, to show the multiple benefits of the sector and the need to maintain a dynamic beef and veal sector in the EU.

Speaking at the event, EU Farm Commissioner **Phil Hogan** said "Our European beef sector is of real strategic importance for the wellbeing of our citizens, because it provides us with safe, healthy, and nutritious food and it is important for our economy, because it provides vital jobs, particularly in our rural areas. As EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, I want our European beef sector to succeed, both today and in the future. And I firmly believe that a strong, modern and well-funded Common Agricultural Policy is the best bet to deliver this success. The full and vocal support of Copa-Cogeca, and all the farmers you represent, is required to build the political support necessary to maintain a strong, modern CAP which continues to deliver for our farmers and our citizens."

Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General **Pekka Pesonen** said "EU farmers are first producers of food and need to remain economically viable to continue to do this. Our beef producers provide nutritious, quality beef as part of a balanced diet to over 500 million consumers. At the same time, they keep rural areas vibrant, providing growth and jobs where often no alternative source of employment exists. But they are facing increasing challenges. Their incomes are low and they are being badly affected by the cost-price squeeze. Now is not the time to propose concessions in the beef sector in the upcoming trade talks with the Latin American trade bloc Mercosur when we do not know the impact of the talks of the exit of the UK from the EU. Mercosur countries also do not meet the same standards as us and investigations into the Brazilian beef scandal have still not been completed. Eleven Ministers have supported us on this and I am delighted that many of them as well as Commissioner Hogan can be here today to enjoy our great gastronomy".

Outlining the action plan, Chairman of Copa and Cogeca Beef Working Party **Jean-Pierre Fleury** said "It is because of these challenges that we have launched today a new action plan to support our high standard beef sector. The plan includes maintaining specific support under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the sector in order to keep this fragile production sector viable. It would be disastrous for these rural areas if our specialist beef farms disappeared from these regions. The plan also includes export schemes – export credits, insurance, export guarantees- to help producers cover the increasing risks posed by entering new markets. Thirdly, promotion measures need to be stepped up for beef from our specialized herds on EU and non-EU markets. More focus also needs to be on tools to help farmers better manage risk in the future CAP. We need to encourage too producers to be members of cooperatives as they can play an important role for farmers. Finally,

performance and innovation on farms needs to be improved through investment aid in order to continue meet sustainability criteria”, he concluded..

Great regional specialities – beef, stew, ribs, burgers - from across the EU were on offer to taste from Belgium, France, Ireland, Finland, Poland, Portugal, UK. The event forms part of our #EUbeef - qualityfirst and #livestockcounts campaign which aims to show how the livestock sector is important not only as part of a balanced diet but also for growth and jobs, vibrant rural areas.

#### **Reactions from some EU Agriculture Ministers:**

“The beef sector is a major economic sector for Europe for many regions, also for the services that it provides in terms of managing the territories and protecting the environment. It’s essential to maintain it to keep our rural areas alive, **Stéphane Travert**, French Minister of Agriculture and Food said.

“For Polish beef producers, a big challenge is to continue increasing our exports. We want to protect and defend our high European standards of beef production. Our farmers produce their beef with great care for their animals and for the environment and respect high welfare standards”, Polish Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development **Krzysztof Jurgiel** said.

“In Wallonia”, underlined the Wallon Minister for Agriculture **René Collin**, “the cattle sector is essential, with nearly 9,000 farms present there. Our model is based on family-based agriculture. Our production respects very high production standards and, above all, high environmental, social and animal welfare standards.” “Wallonia”, through its Minister of Agriculture, René Collin, "pleads with the European authorities that agriculture is not used as a bargaining tool in the context of the ongoing trade negotiations".

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