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Press Release

New Organic Working Party Chairwoman sets out an ambitious plan

This week Copa and Cogeca elected the new Chairmanship of their Working Party on Organic Farming. Lone Andersen, an organic dairy farmer from the DAFC (Denmark), was appointed Chairwoman along with two Vice-Chairs: Luigi Tozzi, from Confagricoltura (Italy), and Heinrich Von Bassewitz from the DBV (Germany).

The newly elected Chairmanship identified the adoption of the implementing and delegated acts, needed to ensure that the organic farming regulation enters into force smoothly on 1st January 2021, as one of the most important points.

Following her election, Chairwoman Lone Andersen stated, *“We will work hard with the Working Party on Organic Farming to ensure that the technical implementing rules meet the needs of organic farmers. In particular, we will continue to promote our positions on poultry production rules and controls in organic farming. We want to see the sectors continue to grow in the EU in order to respond to increasing demand. However, at the same time, organic farmers need to be competitive and this growth must result in relevant economic benefits by maintaining better margins.”*

The EU witnessed a 70% increase in organic surface area between 2007 and 2017. This has allowed the EU to become the second largest consumer of organic food in the world, with retail sales amounting to 34.3 billion euros in 2017. Even though the vast majority of the organic products consumed in the EU are produced in the EU, part of the demand is covered by imported goods. In 2018, 3.3 million tonnes of organic food were imported.

Ms Andersen also stressed the important issue of organic seed and production inputs stating, *“With regard to the delegated act on seed, we will soon present strong proposals on organic seed and heterogeneous material. In addition, we will be active in promoting access for organic farmers to innovation and to new and improved varieties given that organic farmers are restricted in their use of a number of other inputs, such as synthetic fertilisers or pesticides.”*

Ms Andersen added, *“With the upcoming European elections, I wanted to remind everyone that we, as farmers, are part of the solution to mitigating and adapting to climate change. I have established a good network of stakeholders from the organic sector and NGOs at EU level, and I would like for us to work together in order to find common solutions. Solutions that can ensure a substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, while maintaining biodiversity, preserving soil, water and the vibrancy of the EU rural fabric. #WeFarm4EU and all its citizens. I really hope that every citizen and farmer eligible to vote will assume their responsibility and vote for a stronger EU.”*

-ENDS-

Note to the editors:

- Lone Andersen is an organic dairy farmer who lives in the western part of Denmark. The farm, which she owns together with her husband, converted to organic production in 2009, which included a period of mixed farming with conventional pig production and organic dairy production. At present, the farm is 100% organic and is made up of 90 ha of arable land and 115 milking cows. The farm cooperates with organic crop producers who supply organic roughage for the milking cows. Lone Andersen is convinced that her farming background is beneficial when meeting and engaging with officials and politicians in the EU institutions. She has been involved in agricultural policy work since 2004 and in 2013 she was elected Chairwomen of the Danish Family Farmers' Association. In the same year, she was also elected Vice-President of the Danish Agriculture & Food Council, which represents the vast majority of the Danish agriculture and food industry.
- The WeFarm4EU manifesto is available online at www.wefarm4.eu. You can also follow the social media campaign using the hashtag #WeFarm4EU.

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