

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 3rd EAAP Cattle Network Workshop

24 August 2007 - Dublin, Ireland

Participants at the Workshop unanimously agreed that beef production, as one of the most important agricultural sectors in the European Union, required particular attention and support. Its intrinsic values – meeting market demand and consumers' preferences for quality and safe food, contributing to rural employment, landscape and environment management and its role in the international markets – should be strengthened through a variety of measures. Animal science and research are the first to indicate solutions in meeting challenges and opportunities for beef production under the new circumstances created not only by the CAP reform but also by developments in international markets and in other beef producing regions, also taking into account the growing global demand for animal products, including beef.

In this respect, the Workshop commended the Cattle Network's *Beef Task Force* for the excellent study material on the impact of the CAP reform on the beef sector in the European Union.

The Workshop requested the EAAP Council to ensure that proceedings of the workshop are published in the EAAP Technical Series, distributed to all stakeholders in the beef sector in the EU Member States and handed over by the official representatives of the EAAP to the relevant services of the European Commission as an EAAP contribution to the mid-term review of the CAP. The same publication should be forwarded also to COPA-COGECA. The EAAP Secretariat was also requested to place the presentations of the workshop on the website of the Cattle Network.

In discussing the future programmes of the Cattle Network with regard to the beef sector, the workshop recommended that future actions should focus on the following issues:

1. Implementation of CAP rules and regulations and their effects on the cattle sector

- a. The workshop agreed that the Cattle Network should continue to monitor developments in the CAP and initiate studies and analyses of the impact of policy changes and reforms on the cattle sector in the European Union. These studies and analyses should be brought to the attention of stakeholders and policy makers.
- b. Findings and recommendations of the Cattle Network should be forwarded to the EAAP Council and to the relevant EAAP Study Commissions with a view to initiating further in-depth research and studies in fields of cattle genetics, management and health, nutrition and production systems, thus fulfilling the EAAP mission and providing support to the adjustment of the cattle sector to new circumstances.
- c. There was agreement on the necessity of further analysis of CAP effects on major *beef farming systems* in specific countries (following the classification of the Beef Task Force) with the aim to improve understanding of major systems and their dynamic modification in relation to the CAP.

It was felt that this analysis should be based on a standardized/harmonized methodology using already existing frames for farming system analysis as available from the International Farm Comparison Network (C. Deblitz) and be supported by PRA methods to link with stakeholder perception and assessment.

Information should be used for modelling effect scenarios.

- d. The workshop also addressed the need to analyse
- interacting rules and regulations of the CAP, such as landscape/environment protection, rural development;
 - potential effects of global warming/climate change, and
 - impact of price fluctuation of major feeds for beef production.

2. Competitiveness of beef farming systems

The Workshop discussed this important issue at three levels:

a. **Global.**

- Analysis of *trends in the global and regional markets for beef* and beef products which should include production and consumption trends, consumer preferences and their respective influencing factors. This analysis needs to be connected to dairy production and market trends due to the obvious convergence between the two sub-sectors. The Workshop was aware of respective expert groups of market economists doing these studies (e.g. Prof. Martina Brockmeier, FAL-Braunschweig). Consequences of global market changes on EU-production conditions for beef are also investigated by respective expert groups (e.g. Dr. Deblitz, Thünen Institut, FAL Braunschweig)
- Further studies on the *effect of bio-energy production* on land use and feed prices and on the effect of *internalizing the methane factor as an environmental cost* in BFS are required to forecast the competitiveness and perspectives for major beef production systems. The workshop was informed that some economists have started working on these issues (D.Brüggemann, Dr. Deblitz).

b. **Regional.**

- Further information are required to measure the effects of CAP measures supporting rural development through BFS. The main focus should be put on describing sustainable cattle enterprises fitting the ecological and economical environment and on measuring their impact on rural development.
The group also touched on the issue that it may not seem always sensible to promote beef production if the societal objectives are not met.

c. **Farm and Product Value chain.**

The workshop discussed a number of issues related to farm and product value chain:

- Analysis of alternative land use scenarios and their impact on the relative economic competitiveness of cattle farming. Standardized methods for farm-enterprise analysis are available and will be included in a Session of the EAAP Study Commission on Livestock Farming Systems during the Vilnius 2008 meeting.
- Analysis of complete beef value chains to identify strengths and weaknesses of the chain process, of respective stakeholders and to measure transaction costs in order to improve effectiveness.
- Analysis of lessons learned, strengths and weakness of different labelling systems, their organisational requirements and impact for beef farming systems.
- Explore possibilities in reducing current costs in implementing the EU Cattle Identification system. Multi-country comparisons of options and steps discussed and pursued might be useful.

3. Typology of beef farming systems

The workshop agreed on the need for continued work on the typology of beef farms in the EU Member States and on the analysis of strategies in relation to the environmental sustainability of these systems.

- a. The specific description of organisational forms of beef farming and their respective production costs and returns are required for various countries to contribute to a EU-wide assessment.
- b. The existing BFS comparison network (C. Deblitz) should be used as a methodological platform.
- c. The overall BFS analysis should follow procedures and methods used in a Product Value chain approach.
- d. The Workshop felt that more partners need to be identified from countries in the eastern part of Europe.
- e. The Cattle Network should try to link up more with the EAAP Contact Group for CEEC.