

April 2009

Editorial

It soon became clear that the cause of the recent riots in Madagascar was not due to the rivalry between President RAVALOMANA and Mr RAJOELINA, the mayor of its capital city. The protest launched by the country's farming community was in fact against Daewoo's plan to acquire a 99 year lease on 1.3 million hectares, i.e. half of the island's farmland, to produce maize and palm oil.

The financial and food crises are providing an opportunity for a genuine land monopoly to emerge, transforming farms into strategic assets. The biggest players are Korea (2.3 million hectares purchased), China (2.1), Saudi Arabia (1.6), the United Arab Emirates (1.3) and Japan (0.3), all of whom have joined the rush for 'green gold'.

At the same time investment funds are naturally moving into cereal production and other agricultural commodities in Africa, South America, Ukraine, Russia and Australia. This massive phenomenon is still difficult to assess, since governments which sell off their land tend to keep quiet. At a time when a billion people are suffering from hunger this must not be allowed to turn into an indecent form of neo-colonialism, generating new hunger riots and a destruction of the environment in "colonised" countries.

At the time when we investigate our reform of the future CAP, it is urgent that we respond to the dual challenges of food and environmental security. The democratic foundation provided by millions of private landlords who manage the countryside and contribute to a stabilised democracy seem to be paramount. I am sure that the results of the 2nd Agriculture Forum presented in this issue which we organized jointly with Syngenta will provide answers and solutions to the challenges we currently face.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

2nd Forum for the Future of Agriculture

– financing and governing food & environmental security- the new challenge



The global economic crisis, food security and environmental security. The question which has been set for us is of course: «Will the global economic crisis prevent us from achieving food and environmental security?» Historically, when faced with worries about food security, Europeans in positions of power have not always come up with great solutions. ▶

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At the time of the French Revolution, when Marie Antoinette was told that her people had no bread, she of course replied: «Let them eat cake!»

As policy responses go, this was not very sophisticated. And we know what happened to her afterwards. So perhaps I need to think up some better ideas this afternoon....

I shan't go into detail today about the extent of the current crisis.

It's clear that the impact on a number of agricultural sectors in the European Union is very negative; the dairy sector is experiencing particular problems.

It's also clear that the crisis is putting pressure on incomes. Overall, farm income per worker fell by nearly 5 per cent in real terms in 2008 – though that followed growth of 12 per cent in 2007. In any case, whatever the average figures, we know that some farmers are being hit especially hard.

Let's be a little more upbeat: in the European Union, the farm sector benefits from various kinds of support which are not available for other sectors. Thanks to these, the current economic crisis is less likely to threaten our food supply or our environment.

- To support farmers' income, there's a safety net – mainly in the form of direct payments and market instruments.
- At the same time, rural development policy supports farmers' efforts to care for the environment.
- Rural development policy also helps to provide alternative streams of income.

These forms of support for agriculture are valid and they are important.

We certainly don't want to insulate farmers completely against

the rigours of the market. The sector must continue to restructure to keep up with a changing marketplace.

On the other hand, if we leave agriculture too exposed, we're gambling with the security of our food supply and our environment.

It's quite possible that serious crises would wipe out large parts of our production base that are profitable under normal conditions. This would leave us with a narrower range of food suppliers and would also lead to environmental damage in many areas.

Also, without support to deliver certain environmental benefits, farmers simply will not be able to afford to do so.

With all of this in mind, I'll try to be brief, but I have a practical «recipe» for action to suggest to you (this is not simply a «cake recipe»!):

First, we need to make sure that the CAP provides the right kind of safety net for farmers. This safety net should protect them against real crises but still give them freedom to respond to the market.

The changes agreed in the Health Check will bring us closer to this goal.

Secondly, we need to give farmers the right incentives to care for the environment and to prepare for environmental threats – especially climate change and water shortages.

Once again, the Health Check will be helpful in this respect, by putting extra funding on the table to be spent on climate change, water management, renewable energy and biodiversity – as well as restructuring in the dairy sector.

I also look forward to an agreement on freeing up further money as part of the planned «stimulus package» worth € 5 billion.



S. SCHULMEISTER,

J.P. OLIVIER,

A.HANIOTIS,

M. ORLOV

As I've just mentioned renewable energy, I'll mention my third ingredient in the recipe – which is making the right use of all renewable energies.

Various forms of renewable energy – including biofuels! – can be extremely helpful to us. In the case of biofuels, one of the keys to success is having the right sustainability criteria. The criteria which have now been agreed are rigorous, so I'm convinced that we can now move ahead confidently in this field.

Fourthly, we need to be confident in a science-based approach to genetically modified organisms (GMOs). It's beyond question that we must authorise only GMOs which are safe for people, animals and the environment. But within this framework, let's be open to what GM technology can do for us – for example, GM crops which are more resistant to heat or drought.

I've already stated a healthy number of ingredients for my «recipe». But we need a few more.... And we need to use them internationally – because the European Union can't solve challenges of food and environmental security on a unilateral basis.

So, we also need an open approach to trade. As we saw when the food price crisis was at its height, trade restrictions made the markets nervous and so added to our problems. Of course, trade must take place in the right framework. But if we get this right, trade can iron out supply problems and also encourage many developing countries to raise agricultural production.

However, some developing countries also need other kinds of help to raise output. This is the motivation behind our so-called «food facility» which will provide an extra € 1 billion to help developing-country farmers get access to fertiliser and seed, among other things. More generally, the EU is very keen to see «green revolutions» in those parts of the world that need them – for example, some African countries. Then there's the importance of agricultural research. This must quickly move up the international research agenda: it's been a low priority for far too long.

Finally, and very obviously, international talks on climate change must make progress on tackling global warming instead of adding to it by producing hot air.

Given that the European Union accounts for only 14 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, our own plans for combating climate change are important but they won't solve the problem by themselves. The United Nations Climate Change Conference, which of course will take place in Copenhagen in December, must lead to global commitments. These, then, are the key ingredients in my «recipe» for safeguarding food and environmental security in the years ahead.

I admit: the ingredients are expensive! But if we invest the effort and the money which are necessary to acquire them, what comes out of the oven should be rather more helpful than Marie Antoinette's cake. Thank you.

■ Mariann FISCHER-BOEL
Commissioner for Agriculture
and Rural Development

(Commissioner FISCHER- BOEL was taking part in the conclusion panel of the FFA'09, the version above is the official written version)

Czech point of view on CAP and global agricultural situation

Global view

- The actual interest for food security depends on the increase of the global population as well as the continuously decreasing natural sources,
- during the last two years there was a critical decrease of global food stocks – 57 days in 2007 and only 40 days in 2008,
- the food crisis has mainly an effect in the poorest developing countries. A doubling of demand for food is being expected until 2050,
- the epicentre of the global agriculture is assumed to change from the OECD-countries to the developing countries,
- consumption and production of all products except wheat are increasing faster in the developing countries,
- these countries are expected to hold a dominant position in 2017 in production and consumption of all commodities except cereals, cheese and powdered milk,
- similar changing effects will be observed also on global markets. The import will be increasing most in the developing countries and other newly generated economies and developing countries will have a huge part in export,
- even if the interest of the OECD-countries in the global export is increasing these countries will hold a dominant position in exporting wheat, cereals, meat and all milk products,
- for the less developed countries, especially countries with lack of food, the perspectives show more sensibility and unsecure supply of food in a time of instability of prices. It will be very important to improve the capacity of



Jiri URBAN

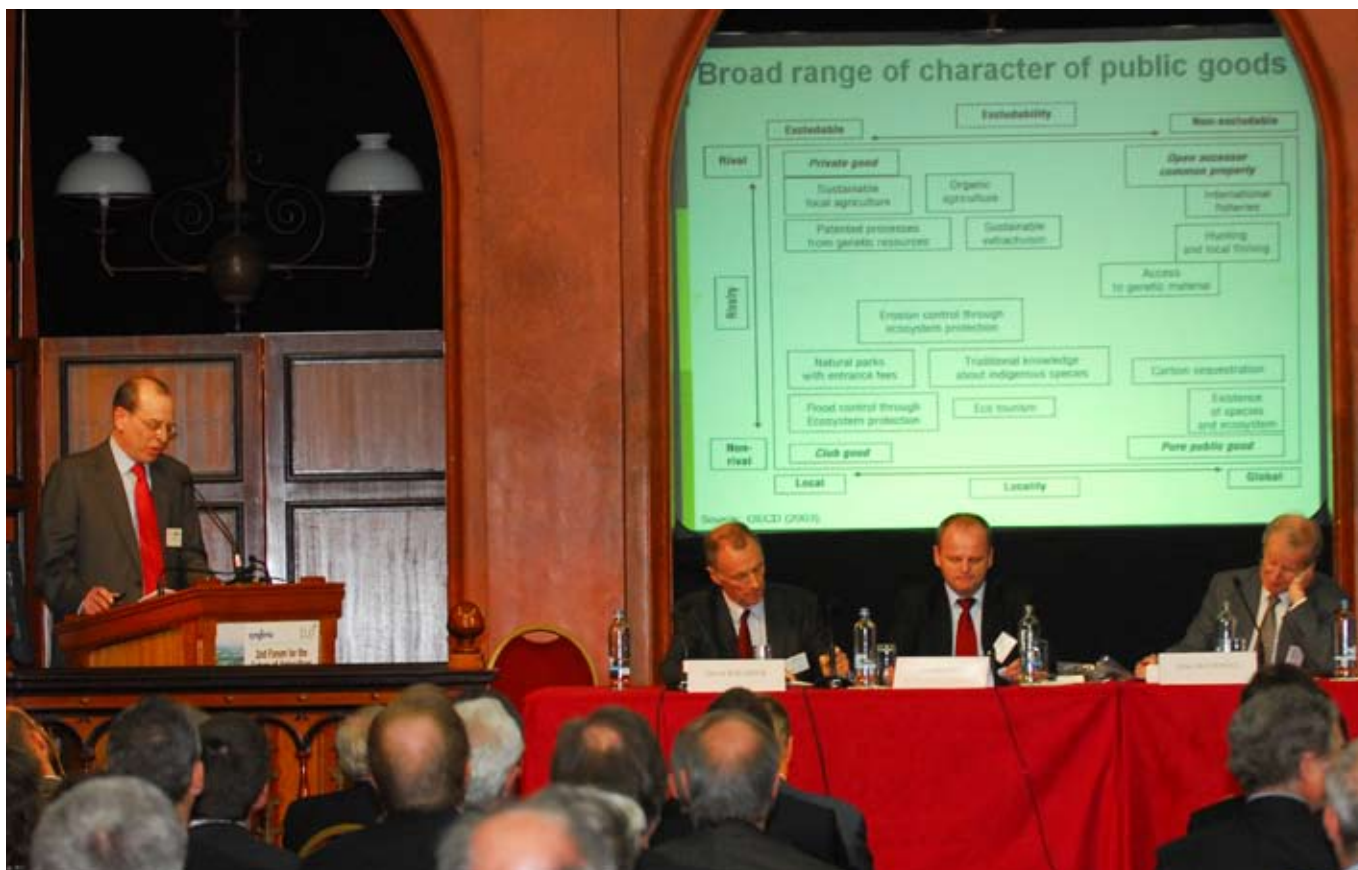
the national supply by investing into education, training as well as research and development and infrastructure,

- even if the prices of commodities were decreasing compared with the high prices of 2007 the dramatic fluctuation of prices of commodities on the global market can, according to the evaluation of FAO and OECD, appear in a still clearer way,
- in connection with these facts it is said that ecological laws and especially the production of bio fuel of the first generation will even worsen the situation to buy agriculture products at reasonable prices,

- according to the figures of the World Bank 860 Mio people are starving globally and the continuous increase of prices for food products will add 100 Mio people to the poor,
- negative effects may be the consequences of restrictive trade policies, e.g. export tax and embargos. This can be on short term of support for the national consumers but for the national producers it is a burden limiting their supply. All together it is contributing globally to the insecurity of the markets,
- however, it can at the same time be dangerous to increase the pressure on the agricultural production regarding possible negative effects on the environment,
- in a long term view it should not be forgotten that the basic condition of food security is to preserve natural resources by adequate management.

EU

- The EU is still regarded as a significant food producer responsible for 17 % of global wheat production, 25 % of global milk production, 20 % of global meat production and 30 % of global beef production,
- a basic question of the common agricultural policy is related to the food security and the unstable markets and their prices.
- it is necessary to have a discussion to find out a way for CAP to resist these upcoming requests (insecure markets, climate change) in order to secure the development of the countryside within the EU,
- priority should be given to European agriculture to be able to meet the continuous and quick changes in the frame of the globalisation of the world markets,



P.NOWICKI,

D.BALDOCK

J.POPP

A.BUCKWELL

- food security must still remain a priority for the CAP. However, it is necessary to meet the same target also on the global level. Therefore some restrictive market measures have to be abolished,
- instruments for decreasing effectively the risk opposing European farmers must be build up, but they must be of such a kind which does not release the farmers from their responsibility but motivate them for insertion into that system,
- for more future investments there will be more support necessary by research and development designed for combat ing climate change and adaptation on the general changes (research on bio fuels of the new generation

- especially planting of plants with high yield,
- development of ecologically favourable and effective fertilizer,
- development of new agricultural technologies with lowest unfavourable effects on the use of the terrain, development of new plants being resistant to climate change and diseases related to it as well as research for the use of agricultural waste,
- new developments in the whole sector are indispensable instruments.

It is obvious to prepare European agriculture to resist the upcoming challenges. At the same time it must be able to produce secure food products of high qua-

lity. Without new developments it will not be possible to meet these purposes.

■ Jiri URBAN

Deputy Minister for Agriculture
(Czech Republic)

Using our soil and water efficiently

Environmentalists are sometimes accused of being unclear in their requirements and economists like clear figures. So, the key indicators in relation to climate change are temperature rise and greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere. Currently, all efforts are aimed at keeping the temperature rise to less than 2°C below pre-industrial levels and below 450ppm CO₂ in the atmosphere. They are clear indicators, they leave no place to hide and no possibility to fudge. In this city of Brussels it is important to recall that the atmosphere is not in the business of compromise!



M. HAMELL,

H. MORIZE

What are the scientists saying? Continuing and worsening predictions regarding the speed and effects of climate change. The international scientific conference in Copenhagen in March 2009 said that high rates of emissions suggest the worst case IPCC scenarios are being confirmed. A paper by D. BATTISTI in *Science* January 2009 suggests that the highest temperatures on record will be the summer norm by mid to late century with serious challenges for food production and daily life and extreme temperatures in some summers causing particular difficulties for food production. In other words, we are in danger of going far beyond the indicators rather than staying well below them.

It is imperative now that we protect land so that it can contribute to

resist and adapt to climate change but in the EU we currently lose about 1500 ha per day of mainly agricultural land to infrastructure and urbanisation. This is a major concern to several Member States including Netherlands which organised a conference on the protection of prime agricultural land in Brussels last November. It is no wonder as the rate of loss of agricultural land in the EU is the equivalent of losing the entire agricultural land area of the Netherlands every three to four years. And this pattern is repeated across the globe. At the same time, according to the FAO, the amount of land for agriculture will need to expand by 13% by 2030.

Scientific consensus recognises the fragile state of the world's soils – the challenges faced by

European soils are echoed in terms of many areas worldwide subject to low organic matter, erosion and increased salinisation. Soil is the biggest terrestrial carbon pool, containing around twice the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and three times the amount to be found in vegetation, and has the potential to be a bigger pool. In reality, it is probably a carbon source! A tiny loss of 0.1% of carbon emitted to the atmosphere from the around 75 billion tonnes currently stored in European soils is the equivalent to the emissions of a hundred million cars. The recent UN paper on agriculture mitigation suggests that worldwide soils could account for more than 85% of agriculture's mitigation potential. Professor Rattan LAL of Ohio State University estimates that properly managed soils worldwide could sequester up to 50ppm CO₂ equivalent. Others stress that urgent attention is required to retain carbon levels in peat soils. According to the CLIMSOIL report ¹ (carried out as a follow up to the Commission conference on soil and climate change ², June 2008), continued peat drainage in the EU from agriculture could result in potential losses of up to 30 million tonnes of carbon equivalent per year, which is about the tailpipe emissions of 40 million cars.

In reality, the very many changes in soil management over the past 50 years – reduced mixed farming,

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/review_en.htm. - ² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/conf_en.htm.

continuous arable, winter in place of spring cereals, greater dependence on inorganic rather than organic fertiliser, as well as disturbing information on trends in soil organic matter – make clear the need to monitor soil and strengthen its protection. That is what the Commission is proposing in the soil framework directive. It is encouraging that this proposal has helped inspire a resolution on soil protection in the US Senate even if the proposal has not yet been adopted in the EU.

What size of tasks can soil take on? Clearly – and regardless of technological improvement – the task of doubling agricultural production as we move to mid century – with some reduced land availability, though other land may come into use, increased climate variation and very probably reduced water availability – is immense. Added to this we need to keep an eye on inorganic fertilisers – the supply of economically minable phosphorus is not inexhaustible – so recycling must move up the agenda. If soil's major tasks are for agriculture, forestry, carbon sequestration and water filtration and protection, then the very interesting and progressive work of Mark JACOBSON of Stanford University on wind, solar and wave renewables and their long term place with respect to global warming, air pollution and energy security is well worth reading because it points a path to providing more space to land to perform these functions. It gives extra meaning to President OBAMA's inaugural speech although historians might also remember John F. KENNEDY's recall in the Irish Parliament in 1963 of George Bernard SHAW's words «I dream things that never were...and I say why not?» We need to.

The EU has a large volume of water legislation in place. The nitrates and urban waste water

directives are key building blocks of the water framework directive. In more recent years we have seen major advances in the implementation of the nitrates directive – better manure storage and management, more rational fertiliser use – leading to benefits for the environment and farmers' pockets. Farm output is not down despite the 50% reduction in inorganic N and P use over the past two decades, which suggests that environmental legislation brings benefits, even economic benefits! And it brings innovation – the Netherlands is working on making manure a source of energy, more usable N and P while returning water of sufficient and acceptable quality to surface water. In 2010 the Commission will report on the implementation of the nitrates directive for the period 2004-2007 and that will indicate the extent to which water quality is changing in response to practice although it is important to stress that water quality improvement does take time.

We now face challenges to implement the water framework directive through river basin management plans. Work since adoption in 2000 has prepared for this implementation, which begins next year with the aim of achieving good water status by 2015. This approach is of great interest to developing countries.

But we also now face challenges notably on scarcity and droughts and we enter a period where we have to move to a water efficient and water saving economy. This represents a huge challenge for agriculture. Those present at the rural development conference organised by DG AGRI in Cyprus in October 2008 saw at first hand the reality of climate change and water scarcity and the difficulties they bring for farmers and society alike. It opened many eyes! The Council has invited the Commission to review and develop

the evolving strategy for scarcity and droughts by 2012. We have of course already put the floods directive in place.

Climate change is real and adaptation is essential now. The Commission expects to adopt a communication in April so we must wait to see the detail but it is clear that awareness, preparedness and resilience are central to adaptation and that soil and water will figure prominently.

Given the nature of EU funding, it is inevitable that we need to look outside environmental policy and legislation to provide the tools to ensure greater water and soil protection and therefore the CAP and, in particular, rural development have had and likely will continue to have great importance. The delivery of the environmental benefits via these means is part of a process which should ensure that farmers remain viable and contribute to produce sufficient food for the population. Environment and agriculture are inextricably linked!

So, it is important to recall the key environmental indicators related to climate change which I indicated at the outset. We have to give much greater prominence to ensuring that we stay as far under those figures as possible for the benefit of the environment but also because the economic future and welfare of mankind and the planet has never been so dependent on getting the environment right.

■ Michael HAMELL
Head of Unit, EC DG AGRI

The speech was made as a keynote address during the "Protecting and enhancing the environment" session of the FFA'09.

Results of the votes of participants

How important is the impact of the financial crisis for world food security ?

1. Very important	44%
2. Somewhat important	36%
3. Somewhat unimportant	10%
4. Unimportant	5%
5. I don't know	5%

How important is the impact of financial crisis for world environmental security ?

1. Very important	41%
2. Somewhat important	34%
3. Somewhat unimportant	18%
4. Unimportant	5%
5. I don't know	1%

Is a new architecture necessary for financing food and environmental security, and at what level ?

1. Yes, at international level	63%
2. Yes, at EU level	23%
3. Yes, at national level	7%
4. Not necessary	4%
5. I don't know	3%

Is a new CAP necessary to provide food and environmental security ?

1. Yes	55%
2. No, but some amendments	33%
3. No, the CAP should be kept as it is	7%
4. I don't know	6%

In the medium-term, international agricultural commodity prices will...

1. Go up	26%
2. Go down	7%
3. Become more volatile	52%
4. Become less volatile	4%
5. I don't know	11%

What does the financial crisis affect most ?

1. Food production	10%
2. Food trade	23%
3. Food balance (rich/poor)	55%
4. None of them	7%
5. I don't know	6%

European agriculture can effectively respond to its challenges.

1. I fully agree	39%
2. I partly agree	46%
3. I disagree	10%

4. I don't know	4%
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Food productivity must double to 2% annual growth in order to feed the world population by 2050. Can this be done ?

1. Yes	68%
2. No	16%
3. I don't know	16%

European land managers be remunerated in accordance with the amount of environmental security they generate:

1. I fully agree	52%
2. I partly agree	38%
3. I disagree	6%
4. I don't know	4%

The current Pillar 2 fulfils the role of protecting and enhancing the environment.

1. I fully agree	11%
2. I partly agree	48%
3. I disagree	22%
4. I don't know	19%

The provision of public goods by land managers provides a valid justification for EU policy and support interventions:



1. I fully agree	49%
2. I partly agree	28%
3. I disagree	13%
4. I don't know	10%

The measures needed to ensure the delivery of public environmental goods by land managers should be primarily financed by :

1. The Single Farm Payment	5%
2. Measures exclusively based on the existing Pillar 2	7%

3. Redesigned and extended rural development measures	20%
4. Redesigned Pillar 1 measures	7%
5. Development of environmental markets	14%
6. A combination of several of these approaches	46%

The restoration of financial health can be done together with enhancing global food and environmental food security.

1. I agree	57%
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2. I disagree	26%
3. I don't know	17%

After CAP reforms and the Health Check a new reform is necessary to respond effectively to the food and environmental security challenge.

1. I fully agree	47%
2. I partly agree	34%
3. I disagree	15%
4. I don't know	4%



YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

A reflection on KRUGMAN's keynote address

The 2nd Forum for the Future of Agriculture was attended by over 400 participants out of which about 10 were YFCS members. The Forum focused on the security of the food supply and brought together various top-level decision makers from around the globe not only from the industrial and political worlds but also from the scientific community. To this extent the keynote speaker, Paul KRUGMAN, put forward a disturbing point of view that will hopefully have contributed to sending alarm bells ringing at the heart of Europe.

Paul KRUGMAN, who was 2008's Economics Nobel Prize Winner and is a Professor at Yale University, argued that last year's significant increase in food prices was not fuelled by speculation and pointed out that they were the result of fundamental economic imbalances in agricultural markets. Even if, as other speakers tended to argue and repeatedly tried to demonstrate throughout the Forum, speculation must have been a least partly responsible for the hike in agricultural commodity prices in the last couple of years, KRUGMAN's remarks are worrying to say the least.

2007 and 2008 saw the largest amount of food riots since the nineteen seventies in developing countries and emerging economies such as Brazil, Egypt, India, Mexico, the Philippines, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Senegal, Mauritania, Ivory Cost, Morocco, Bolivia, Yemen, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Russia. KRUGMAN advocated for a global response to the

problem, which not surprisingly has been overshadowed in recent months by the global economic downturn. He warned that «we will realise that we have a food crisis» sparked by resource constraints, triggered by a growing world population and rising demand for resource intensive foods once we start to see signs of a global economic recovery.

KRUGMAN argued that last year's crisis and rapid increase in food prices proved wrong many governments which had assumed that large food stocks were unnecessary as it was deemed that markets and global trade would eventually take care of food shortages and supply and demand imbalances. Last year's events showed that in a crisis situation, countries impose export bans on their agricultural commodities to protect the poorest members of their populations. He warned that while it makes political and social sense to protect these people, «the markets cannot be relied upon» because «the global food market breaks down exactly when it is the most needed».

To tackle the imminent crisis, KRUGMAN put forward the view, which was widely supported by other speakers throughout the conference, that «we first need to invest in future food production, both in physical infrastructure and Research and Development» which has been on the decrease since the "green revolution" as mentioned by Franz FISCHLER, Chairman of the Forum and former EU Agriculture Commissioner. Other speakers as well as Professor KRUGMAN highlighted the impor-

tance of vital private and public investment in technology and increases in agricultural productivity, through for example perhaps genetically modified products, to tackle desertification, water shortages, the loss of arable land and climate change. KRUGMAN added that «policies need to address the overall resource crisis» as agriculture is more restrained by resources than other production. In this regard the debate surrounding biofuels and whether Europe should solely focus on food production is far from over.

KRUGMAN highlighted the need for a better system for providing financial aid to the agricultural sector, going as far as suggesting "an IMF for food" which would address the real issue of unfair subsidies for producers and consumers in developing countries whilst not drawing our attention away from environmentally friendly and sustainable agricultural production. Even if it is likely that the developed world will be less affected (I say less because Europe is by no means immune to the changing climate which has already resulted in the loss of arable land, early signs of desertification and water shortages in Mediterranean countries), a further deterioration of the food crisis could, apart from causing further and more serious economic, political and social unrest, lead to very significant medium-term migration flows towards the northern western world. Thus ultimately the consequences of the food crisis are far scarier than the food crisis itself.

■ Sebastian HILLGARTH
YFCS Board Member



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The Environment and Soil Management Award Gala Dinner

For the fourth time, the European Landowner's Organization (ELO) under the patronage of Commissioner for the Environment Stavros DIMAS, the auspices of the European Commission (DG ENVIRONMENT and the Joint Research Centre) and in association with the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences of Vienna (BOKU), Syngenta International AG, as well as the Centre for Soil and Environmental Sciences of the Ljubljana University, welcomed projects for the annual «Environment and Soil Management Award».

This year, 6 applications were received describing good management experiences in different Member States. All answering to the aim of fostering new concepts of protection and their realisation and to enhance awareness with regard to the importance of soil and environmental activities.

In spite of the high quality of the applications received, the jury, chaired by Professor Winfried BLUM, decided to recognize the efforts of Mrs. Jana MADEROVA, on her project "Jistebnice Highlands" (Czech Republic) and the Domains Listel for their sustainable soil management in Mediterranean coast (France) as a consequence of their outstanding contribution to soil recovery in a rural threatened ecosystem in Europe.

The first applicant, was awarded 2500 € and a diploma of recognition, for her efforts to preserve the family land in the same condition as prior to the period of socialist collectivisation, where the land was spared inappropriate interference with the water regime, with erosion-control ridges, as well as moors and damp meadows preserved. In 1991, she was able to regain possession of the land and manage it in an environmentally sound manner, preserving the existing biodiversity and allowing the exhibiting of a landscape cultivated by humans in the period of time when low-scale farming was the primary source of livelihood.

The second project mentioned, was attributed a diploma of excellence for Listel actions aimed at fighting against soil erosion and salinisation, preserving soil from pollution and improving soil biodiversity and biological activity.

Listel produces wine on relict sandbanks formed by the Rhône River, at the French Mediterranean coast, also recognised as a UNESCO site and been included in the Natura 2000 network. Its vineyards and natural habitats are divided in patches designing an odd and curious mosaic which defines the landscape management in the Mediterranean coast. Besides the wine, reaching today about 4.5 millions of bottles, horse breeding is also an important activity on the Jarras estate.

Being a main producing factor and a non-renewable resource, soil is a crucial component of landscape management, which is worked to fit to the thematic strategy of the European Union on soils protection in the Mediterranean Basin and even anticipate a coming specific legislation on soils protection. Therefore, maintaining traditional activities like "enjoncage" and sowing cereals in the vineyards, improve soils biological diversity and activity, supply the estate with fresh water in order to counteract the salinisation, maintain agricultural practices that have proven they are ecologically and economically sustainable and improving the knowledge on fresh

water table dynamic and its impact on vineyards, are examples of their concrete actions in the field of land use and land management, pursuing soil protection as defined by EU criteria in a preventive approach.

The Award and Diploma were announced during a Gala Dinner on the 18th march 2009, an event which gathered about 250 guests at Cercle Gaulois, including Konstantin KOSTOPOULOS, Member of Cabinet of Commissioner Stavros DIMAS and the prize givers.

The event was opened by Thierry de l'ESCAILLE with a comment from Mike MACK, Syngenta's CEO, mentioning the purpose and importance of this Award on improving the soils in Europe. It was followed by the President of the Jury, also stressing the functions of this non-renewable resource, crucial for environmental, social and even economic aspects of our life which are facing some major threats, enhanced by unsustainable use of soils and climate change.

■ Ana ROCHA
ELO

Soil award

ELO welcomes new projects which fits the criteria and contributes to mitigate the threats that European soils faces nowadays. The application should be submitted directly by a European physical or legal person or a public institution working in the field of land use or land management, or indirectly through organizations.

Besides, it must contain the name of the project, the mail address (with zip code), the phone number and E-mail address, an executive summary (maximum 1 page) and the main

document, describing the achievements presented for award (maximum 20 pages).

For this year prize, the applications should be sent in by the 30 November

2009. Any requests for application or further information may be submitted to the Awards Coordinator of ELO by post or mail at :

forest.assistant@elo.org

The members of the jury are experts in the field of soil and related sciences:

Mr. Winfried E.H. BLUM, European Confederation of Soil Science Societies (ECSSS); University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria. [Chairman]

Mr. Thierry de L'ESCAILLE, ELO, member of the Committee ex officio, Brussels, Belgium

Mr. Michael HAMELL, European Commission, DG ENV, Brussels, Belgium

Mrs. Marie-Cécile LEBAS, Syngenta International AG, Brussels Office, Belgium



W. BLUM, J.URBAN, J. MADEROVA, K. KOSTOPOULOS, T. DE L'ESCAILLE

Mr. Franc LOBNIK; University of Ljubljana: Biotechnical Faculty, Centre for Soil and Environmental Sciences, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Mr. Luca MONTANARELLA; European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Institute for Environment and Sustainability; Ispra, Italy.

Diary Dates 2009

20 April - 1 May, United Nations, New York, NY
United Nation Forum on Forests
<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

6-10 May, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
"Agraria" International Trade Fair for Agriculture, Food Industry and Packaging
<http://www.agraria.info.ro/en/>

6-14 May, Brussels
Small and Medium-sized enterprises week
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/entrepreneurship/sme-week/index_en.htm

7-8 May, Brussels
Renewable Energy 2020: Opportunities & Challenges
<http://www2.eurelectric.org/Content/Default.asp?PageID=704>

15-17 May, European Union
European Minerals Day
<http://www.mineralsday.eu/home.html>

20 May, European Union
European Maritime Day
http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday/index_en.html

22 May, European Union
International day of Biodiversity – Theme: Alien invasive species
<http://www.cbd.int/idb/>

24-26 May, Copenhagen, Denmark
World Business Summit on Climate Change, organised by the Copenhagen Climate Council. Participation of OECD.
<http://www.copenhagenclimatecouncil.com/index.php/the-world-business-summit-on-climate-change-2>

26-28 May, Brussels
Sustainable development: A challenge for research. Conference DG Research
http://ec.europa.eu/research/sd/conference/2009/index_en.cfm



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