

Media Statement

Brussels, March 15, 2011

FFA2011 calls for an ambitious CAP Reform to deliver sustainable food production for Europe and the world

The annual Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA2011), which took place today in Brussels, turned the spotlight on the reform of the EU's Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and called for it to be strengthened and better targeted to meet consumer demand for safe, affordable, high quality food that is produced in a more sustainable way.

In addition to the headline conclusion, delegates also reached a consensus on the need for farmers to be properly rewarded for their contribution – whether in relation to the crops they grow or the environmental and land management services their activities provide. There was also general agreement about the need for EU agriculture to safeguard and further enhance agricultural production thereby contributing to meeting the global challenge of food security. In this respect, technology and knowledge transfer should be harnessed to improve both the productivity and sustainability of agriculture and to prepare farmers for the challenges of climate change.

Finally, participants at the Forum showed a strong belief that the CAP and other related policies should preserve the economic, social and environmental viability of rural areas which are the bedrock of the food production system in Europe. These areas are facing severe pressure today from urbanization and the current economic downturn.

In his opening address, the Chairman of FFA2011, Franz Fischler, said: *“The world’s status quo is not an option. There still is too much food insecurity for too many. There still are too many hungry farmers, and landless labourers without sufficient land and income to support their families. There still are food and agricultural policies discouraging farm production for the domestic market, and international trade policies benefitting mostly the large farmers. And the new anxiety about food insecurity is worsening as population growth outstrips the annual increase in food productivity, and as farm incomes suffer from instabilities caused by volatile commodity markets and input prices. Through the reformed CAP, and through multilateral institutions such as the FAO as well as bilaterally, the EU and the world community of nations can and must do better to reverse negative trends advocating efficiency, sustainability and fairness in domestic and international agricultural policies and trade. This is our common challenge and we must not fail.”*

Speaking of the need to refocus security on food and nature, Lester Brown, Founder and President of the Earth Policy Institute, argued: *“The tightening of world food supplies is not primarily event-driven but trend-driven. Trends on the supply side include rising temperatures, falling water tables, soil erosion, and a shrinking backlog of unused agricultural technology.”*

John Atkin, Chief Operating Officer at Syngenta and founding partner of FFA commented: *“European farmers have been very successful in consistently producing high quality affordable food. With recent increases in food prices, it is vital that they continue to maximize productivity. Yet society rightly demands that food is produced in a more environmentally sustainable way. Sustainable intensive agriculture – effectively growing more from less – is the best way to do this but farmers must have access to the right technology and know-how. All those who have a relationship with the farmer including technology providers and the food chain must align their strategies to this goal and ensure farmers are properly rewarded for their work. Government has a critical role to play too and I am encouraged by the communication on the reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, which goes in this direction. However, all stakeholders need to be concerned by extreme precaution in EU regulatory processes which can needlessly deprive farmers of safe technologies needed to maximize productivity in a sustainable way.”*

ELO Secretary General and FFA founding partner, Thierry de L’Escaille, said: *“The EU citizens demand more and more from EU agriculture which places it under serious pressure. Not only must land managers produce safe and high-quality food at affordable prices but they are asked to provide citizens with environmental services – public goods for which there are no markets. Moreover, agriculture has to adapt to climate change challenges, biodiversity losses and deteriorating environmental conditions. It is crucial that EU leaders tackle this challenge and provide land managers with the right tools to produce the necessities for life, food and environmental services. Failure to act will have detrimental effects not only on agriculture but also for individual citizens of the EU.”*

This was the fourth meeting of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture and the last major gathering of its kind before the European Commission publishes its legislative proposal on the reform of the CAP. EU Commissioners, Dacian Cioloș, (Agriculture & Rural Development) and Janez Potocnik, (Environment), as well as MEPs Paolo De Castro, George Lyon, Reimer Böge and Mairead McGuinness, were amongst the speakers addressing more than 1000 delegates at FFA2011¹. Other speakers included representatives from across the food and farming chain, NGOs, and civil society, including the world renowned environmental leader, Lester Brown.

About FFA

The annual Forum is an initiative of the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO) and Syngenta. It brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to catalyze thinking on the way European agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges that it faces in delivering food and environmental security. The Forum was created in 2008 in response to a belief that many EU policies impacting on agriculture are focused on solving yesterday’s problems, such as overproduction, and do not deal with the new challenges and market opportunities. Challenges include feeding a growing world population, demand for a higher quality diet, increased demand for renewable sources of energy and changing weather patterns. With limited arable land available, there is a need to sustainably maximize production from that already under cultivation.

www.forumforagriculture.com

About ELO

The European Landowners’ Organization (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 27 EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit making, ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. ELO aims at promoting a prosperous countryside through the dynamism of private landowners. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

www.elo.org



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About Syngenta

Syngenta is one of the world's leading companies with more than 26,000 employees in over 90 countries dedicated to our purpose: Bringing plant potential to life. Through world-class science, global reach and commitment to our customers we help to increase crop productivity, protect the environment and improve health and quality of life.

www.syngenta.com or www.growmorefromless.com

About RISE

The Rural Investment Support for Europe (RISE) Foundation is the only pan-European foundation devoted to the conservation and development of the rural world. Chaired by Franz Fischler, it deals with policy analysis and project financing.

www.risefoundation.eu

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ⁱ Paolo De Castro MEP (S&D) is Chairman of the Agriculture & Rural Development Committee; George Lyon MEP (ALDE) is a Member of the Agriculture & Rural Development Committee and Rapporteur for the Report, CAP post 2013; Reimer Böge MEP (EPP) is a Member of the Budget Committee and Rapporteur for the multi-annual financial framework; Mairead McGuinness MEP (EPP) is a Member of the Agriculture & Rural Development Committee and author of a European Parliament Report on Food Security.



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