



# Health at the Heart of CAP

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Health and Common Agricultural Policy  
reform: Opinion and proposals of an  
expert working group – European  
Health Forum, Gastein 2002

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# Background

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- Working group of academics, health service staff, politicians, representatives from NGO and WHO met at the European Health Forum, Gastein.



# Task

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- Identify main health issues relating to CAP
- Discuss the implications of the Fischler recommendations
- Look at specific sectors, e.g., wine, fruit and vegetables
- Identify health promoting reforms



# Task

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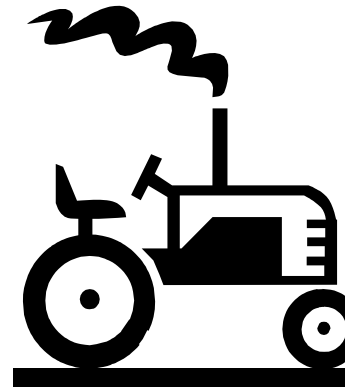
- Present the findings and recommendations to conference delegates
- Agree and produce a document setting out the recommendations that will be of use to NGOs and others working for CAP reform



# CAP: past and future

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- CAP accounts for 45% EU budget
- Originally successful in meeting demand – but now overproducing
- Citizens pay for CAP and again in tax on food products





# Suggested changes in the Mid Term Review

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- Removing the link between production of certain foods and subsidies (decoupling)
- Strengthening rural development at the expense of market policy (compulsory dynamic modulation)
- A ceiling on the cash subsidy received by individual farms



# Suggested changes continued

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- Payments to farmers to be conditional on meeting environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards (cross compliance)
- Introduction of farm audits to ensure EU subsidies are not misused



# Our discussions reflected on

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- The current health impacts of CAP
- The health impacts of the proposed reforms
- Other nutrition and health initiatives, e.g. The Eurodiet Project
- The implications of EU enlargement



# Promoting Nutrition through the CAP: Fruit and Vegetables

- WHO recommends at least 400g fruit and vegetables daily (excluding potato)
- Protects against cardiovascular disease, some cancers and deficiencies



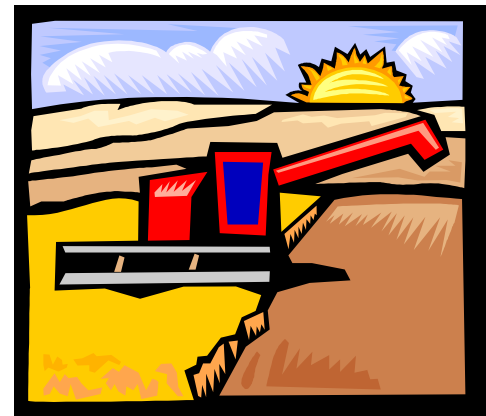
# Promoting Nutrition through the CAP: Fruit and vegetables

- Need to increase fruit and vegetable production
- Lower prices to improve access for consumers
- Stop destroying surpluses - redistribute



# Promoting Nutrition through the CAP: cereals

- Good source of fibre, micronutrients and low in fat
- Human population needs to eat more (replace fat)
- Reduce use as animal feed



# Promoting Nutrition through the CAP: fats

- Current fat intake is too high
- Associated with heart disease, some cancers and obesity
- Yet saturated fats heavily subsidised (aided consumption)



# Promoting Nutrition through the CAP: fats

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- We should promote unsaturated fat for cooking and as a spread
- Reduce the support for cattle (dairy & beef)
- Promote fish, including oily fish



# Promoting Nutrition through CAP: Alcohol



- Moderate alcohol consumption may benefit health – BUT more than 2 drinks per day may be harmful
- Well established health risks
- CAP should not support wine production and promotion

# Promoting Nutrition through the CAP: sugar

- Sugar promotes tooth decay and obesity, and consequently diabetes and heart disease
- EU sugar beet is subsidised, imports of sugar cane heavily taxed



# Promotion of Nutrition through the CAP: sugar

- Excess EU sugar is dumped on export markets to the detriment of farmers in developing world
- Sugar consumption should be reduced and production incentives removed





# Promoting Healthier Lives through the CAP: tobacco

- Smoking kills
- Yet tobacco farmers receive subsidy of one billion euros each year
- Approximately 70% of tobacco farmers income is through EU support



# Promoting Healthier lives through the CAP: tobacco

- The European Court of Auditors have described this subsidy as “a misuse of public funds”
- Subsidies should be redefined as regional aid





# Promoting Healthier Lives through CAP: Enlargement

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- Potential for greater health inequalities
  - Deterioration of local way of life, the rural landscape, increase in overall unemployment and disruption of communities
  - Increasing the cost of food and reducing the quality of diets, especially urban poor, retired people and children



# Health proposals for CAP Reform: we support

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- A competitive agriculture sector
- Health promoting, environmentally friendly food production
- A fair standard of living and income stability for agricultural community
- Diversity in forms of agriculture, maintain visual amenities and supporting rural communities



# Health Proposals for CAP Reform: We are against

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- Continued support of high fat animal foods
- Continued and subsidised promotion of wine consumption and distillation
- Continued subsidy of tobacco farming
- Not mentioned in MTR – maintaining high fruit and vegetable prices through withdrawals of produce, limiting access to poorer citizens



# Urgent Recommendations for CAP Reform

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- Reform must be responsive to health issues
- EU must ensure that health protection requirement of Article 152 of the Treaty of Amsterdam is applied to CAP
- Reform should support production and promotion of healthy foods, e.g. fruit and vegetables rather than maximising food production in general



# Urgent Recommendations for CAP Reform

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- CAP changes following enlargement must promote health gain in accession countries and protect social welfare, particularly in rural areas
- CAP should encourage the food industry to produce and promote healthy food and reduce negative practices



# What next?

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- Will be distributed via the European Heart Network
- Who else should it be sent to?
- Who would benefit from this information?
- Should CAP be discussed at the European Health Forum?



**This paper was produced for a meeting organized by Health & Consumer Protection DG and represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumer Protection DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.**