Mainstreaming public health in Agriculture Policy

European Agriculture and Health Consortium

EHFG 2009
1. What is EAHC?

- European public health organisations advocating for a public health nutrition dimension in the Common Agriculture Policy
1. What is EAHC?

Members

- European Heart Network
- European Public Health Alliance
- EuroHealthNet
- Heart of Mersey
- National Heart Forum
- North West Health Brussels Office
Key Messages

- Agriculture policy is a primary determinant of health
- Scaling up change – using local evidence to influence macro policy
- Evidence is good – but political will, packaging and marketing are important
- Effective change = Environmental change and adequate Public Policy
Objectives

It's actually simple!

- Less energy dense, more nutrient dense > Increased consumption of F/V, grains (whole) > plant based diets.

- Decreased consumption of high fat dairy and meats, red meat and confectionary products high in fat and sugar.
Objectives

- Not just health education, campaigns, social marketing, informed choice...

...but a joined up approach targeting healthier environments and adequate public policy to tackle chronic disease and health inequalities
SFS – an efficient tool

- A School Fruit Scheme could be the initiation of a **change in school curricula** establishing a real nutrition policy for school children.
- School children whose **habits** are formed towards higher consumption of F&V remain high consumers of F&V as adults and low consumers remain so as they grow up;
- A SFS is not a ‘**miracle cure**’ to solving obesity amongst children, but is only a contribution to addressing this complex problem, as part of a healthy life style.
**Political Context**

**EU White Paper, "A Strategy on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity" (30 May 2007).**

Encompasses a range of **Commission Policies** with the purpose of improving nutrition and preventing overweight and obesity (non-exhaustive list):

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<th>Initiative / Project</th>
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<td><strong>School Fruit Scheme</strong></td>
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<td>School milk scheme</td>
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SFS at a glance - Three pillars:

- **Purchase and distribution** of fruit & vegetables in schools
- **Accompanying measures** for information on health benefits, involvement of teachers and parents, re-establish link to agriculture (no EU co-financing)
- **Monitoring, evaluation & information** as integrated part of any Member State SFS
SFS at a glance – EU financing

- Produce
- Related costs of logistics, distribution & equipment
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Communication
SFS at a glance - Subsidiarity

- Voluntary Member State participation
- Eligible products within CMO F&V incl. bananas, final list defined by MS competent (public health) authorities
- On-going SFS models in MS maintained (choice of frequency and period of F&V distribution)
Conference – recommendation

- Setting up of two expert groups:
  - **Expert/scientific group** involving researchers in the fields of public health and education to take up an academic, advisory function
  - **Consultative/stakeholders group** to advise on the practicalities of implementation, exchange best practices and assist in designing and updating an internet networking portal which would facilitate the transfer of knowledge between Member States
Policy development – success factors

- Explicit public health goal*
- Relentless marketing of evidence
- Political Champions
- Engaging public health and stakeholders*
- Transparency*
- Establishing an adequate legal basis*

Food Aid to Most Deprived Persons (MDP)

- Traditionally a market mechanism for disposing of surplus
- Increased budget (€ 500 M) to allow purchases on the market
- Provision of a healthy food basket
- Linking to initiatives targeting accessibility to healthy diets (eliminating food poverty)
Food Aid to Most Deprived Persons (MDP)

....Health Policy, Social Policy, Agriculture Policy or joined up food policy?
Opportunities for Major Change

- Budget Review 2008/2009
- Post 2013 CAP debate
CAP 2013 – important drivers

- Climate Change – both adapting to and mitigation of
- Limited land and water resources
- Global Food Security or Sufficiency
- Quality as competition parameter
- Public goods for Public money
- Budget reform 2008/2009
CAP – or Crisis Management?

- Current crisis in the Dairy Sector
- Feed crisis
- Financial Crisis
- Environmental Crisis
- Global Food security Crisis
- Public Health Crisis

Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases are currently one of the greatest threats to public health in EU (Daar et al. 2007) and the social and economic costs are staggering.
Crisis

- **The bad news**: Financial crisis will probably exacerbate existing inequalities in diet and health and have a negative effect on farm incomes.

- **The good news**: Recommendations for an “environment friendly”, “healthy” diets, and “global food security” diets point in the same direction.
Reform or a radically different approach?

From CAP to a Common Sustainable Food Policy ...

...how can health, environment, infrastructure and agriculture be better linked?
“What you are asking us to do, is put Obesity alongside Climate Change on our agenda, and to do this you have to help us build public support”

Lars Hoelgaard, Deputy Director-General DG AGRI
Key Messages

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Thank you!

- Any questions, comments or good ideas, please send me a mail at:

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