

## New Year's message 2016 to farmers by Commissioner Phil Hogan

Hello, I'm Phil Hogan, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. I would like to wish you and your family a peaceful and prosperous 2016. 2015 was a challenging year for European farm families.

The impact of global oversupply in dairy products and pigmeat, the impact of the Russian ban and lower demand in large markets such as China, all contributed to making 2015 a volatile year for producers.

It was for this reason that I brought forward a comprehensive €500 million euro Solidarity Package in September last. It is part of my constant commitment to supporting European farm families through tough times.

The Solidarity Package comprised a series of measures to help producers in the short, medium and long term – by improving cashflow, but also by targeting the core structural causes of market volatility. Part of the package includes an improved Private Storage Aid scheme for Pigmeat, which opens this week. This will help pig producers in 2016 by taking product off the market, providing a vital safety net.

I will continue the work in 2016, with a "diplomatic offensive" to open new markets for EU producers. In February, I will lead a business delegation to Colombia and Mexico, and will follow this up with visits to key markets such as China and Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia later in the year.

EU producers deserve a level playing field in the global market place. In order to deliver on this for our farmers, I, alongside Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom, negotiated a square deal for EU agriculture in Nairobi last month at the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference.

The WTO deal will see our major competitors phase out both direct and indirect export subsidies to their producers – following the lead of the EU. This means fair play for our exporters on global markets – a significant boost for EU farmers in 2016 and beyond.

2016 will see further progress on simplification – I intend to announce a new series of measures, which will further simplify farm payments.

This will build on the significant changes made in 2015, including the simplification of guidelines for direct payments, the extension of the period for submitting payments applications, as well as the inclusion of preliminary cross checks for 2016, to help weed out the errors and prevent penalties before the application is submitted. 2016 will also be about listening to the views of farmers on the first full year of greening. I welcome your contributions and your feedback, which will feed into the planned review of greening and EFAs this year.

In conclusion, 2016 will continue to see me placing an emphasis on driving jobs and growth and boosting exports. The new CAP is more than ever a policy for *all* the citizens of Europe. As European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, I will continue to work hard to ensure that the CAP fits for the people of Europe.