

EU Expert Committee on the School Fruit Scheme Elects Chairman

The European School Fruit Scheme (SFS) has now been running since 2009 and the newly appointed expert committee will undertake the first review of its operation. The committee will be looking into both evaluation and implementation and also aims to provide expert advice to the commission, says Professor Bent Egberg Mikkelsen, chair of the committee.

Professor Mikkelsen is Denmark's leading expert on food in schools and a specialist in food and nutrition interventions at school.

"It's a very good thing that we now see health on the agenda of the European agricultural policy and there is no doubt that fruit at school gives health value for the money," says Bent Egberg Mikkelsen, Research Coordinator at the MENU Research Center (Meal Science & Public Health Nutrition) at Aalborg University. "But it is obviously important to assess the experience gained, for example, to look at whether the schemes can help address the social inequalities in health, to look at the effect of the so-called accompanying measures such as farm visits, school gardens and other food activities in school in terms of encouraging good dietary habits in children and if the administrative burden on schools can be made smaller", says Bent Egberg Mikkelsen.

The expert committee that has a mandate of 3 years has elected Professor Fergus Lowe (United Kingdom) and Pediatrician Margherita Caroli (Italy) as co-chairs.

More information:

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Facts:

- The EU supports SFS with 90 million Euro, increasing to 150 million annually
- In the 2009/2010 school year, 4.7 million children participated in the system
- The EU School Fruit Scheme is part of the European agricultural policy
- All Member States, with the exception of Sweden, Finland and the United Kingdom, are participating in the scheme