



Alan Jagoe

President of the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)

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Commissioner, guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to you all. My name is Alan Jagoe and I have the pleasure of being the President of CEJA the European Council of Young Farmers.

First and foremost I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Hogan for his speech, and for working your diary to be with us today. I'd also like to thank the organisers of today's event, the European Network for Rural Development, without which this wouldn't have been possible.

During this joint event we come together to discuss a pressing issue in the agricultural sector, that of Generational Renewal through Rural Development across Europe.

As it stands, Europe is faced with an aging Farming population, with more half of farmers aged 55 or older, a strong motivator for us to make farming an attractive and viable career choice for the young people in the union.

To us, the Rural Development Programme is a way to do this, to help the rural areas of the EU meet the wide range of economic, environmental and social challenges that the 21st century throws there way.



Rural Development is central to supporting rural communities and economies but more so to sustain farmers in rural areas.

Cork 2 has set out a blueprint for a potential for future rural development programs and I myself was delighted to be part of the initial process last September in my hometown of Cork. Indeed, only last Friday I was involved in a panel with Commissioner Hogan titled "from reflection to action" and right now that is exactly what we need.

I think it's important to note that while Cork 2 has wide ranging ten point plan to follow we as CEJA need to lend our focus to the measure that matters most to us - that of Generational Renewal.

It is only through focusing our efforts on Generational renewal that we can support the setup and establishment of young farmers who will become the people who feed a growing world population.

The Commission's own reports have found that we Young Farmers are more productive, efficient, environmentally conscious and sustainable than our older counterparts, thanks mainly to widespread education and our willingness to participate in the uptake of technology and innovation.



Many Young Farmers would not be farming today if it wasn't for their connection to their family farms. I myself am a dairy and cereal farmer, farming in a family farm partnership with my father and brother, but what is there for those without the family connection?

All of those farmers who have gone before us have served Europe, and this can't be forgotten. These are people who have worked long and hard, and many are at a stage in their lives where they would like to take a step back but there is no mechanism to do so.

Do we need to start looking at a sustainable model for these older farmers to step back gracefully and with dignity? Do we need to start looking at developing and supporting land mobility measures? Do we want to see what effective and innovative risk management tools? How can knowledge transfer improve the efficiency AND profitability of our farms?

Commissioner, we have already discussed and approved that we want to see more of a results oriented and realistic measurable targets for environmental measures. I think this innovative approach will deliver a much more sustainable future for us all.



It will underpin the CAP and strengthen our argument to have a well funded CAP and Rural Development programme.

In its position as a representative for young farmers CEJA is working hard to ensure a future for the farming sector.

We must show the public that our farming activity is a public good. The countryside and environment, which often get taken for granted, did not just appear out of thin air. Generations of farming activity has shaped Europe into one of our most valuable and treasured assets and we should be proud of our work.

Today in nearly all sectors the viability of family farms is a real threat. Volatile markets, Brexit, and unrest over trade deals are all of concern. We do need to look to the future to face up to a growing population and a growing demand on the agriculture sector. It needs to be at the forefront of discussions, and that's what we need to focus on today.

With that in mind, I am really delighted to be here with you today to partake in the discussions ahead, and warmly invite all of you to share your views, and to act on what you learn from here forwards, as I can assure you I will.