



By Maura Maxwell

Friday 18th October 2019, 13:57 GMT

## EU produce policy comes under the spotlight



### EU agricultural regions renew their call on policymakers to reinforce the F&V CMO and PGI schemes

European produce associations and policy makers held a joint conference this week to discuss the future of EU fruit and vegetable production.

Under the theme 'Governance, Common Market Organisation and Geographical Indications in the future CAP post 2020', the conference looked at the current state of play of the CAP reform, proposed amendments to the Fruit and Vegetable CMO and Quality Schemes, as well as the role of European regions as managing authorities in the future CAP.

The 100+ participants included members of the Assembly of European Horticultural Regions (AREFLH), Association of European Regions for Products of Origin (AREPO) and the Coalition of European AgriRegions.

Opening the conference's first session on the role of European regions in the future CAP. Olivier Allain of AgriRegions

recalled that regions have played a "key role in promoting and achieving the agroecological transition, the competitiveness and the attractiveness of farms and rural areas".

Stressing the importance of maintaining regional managing authorities in the future CAP, Friedlinde Gurr-Hirsch, state secretary in the Ministry for Rural Affairs and Consumer protection of Baden-Württemberg and Arnold Schuler, provincial councillor for agriculture of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol called for a strong second pillar with regional flexibility to address both farmers' and consumers' expectations at local level.

"It is impossible to address the many challenges faced by the European agriculture without reinforcing the role of the Regional Authorities in the management of the second pillar and that the CAP regulation should evolve in this direction," said MEP Herbert Dorfmann.

Questioned on the environmental ambition of the CAP, Kari Valonen, SCA spokesperson at the Finnish Permanent Representation insisted that the European Green Deal cannot happen without the CAP and a strong second pillar with tailored measures tackling local environmental and climate challenges.

The second session discussed the current challenges faced by the fruit and vegetable sector. Moderator Simona Caselli, regional Minister for Agriculture of the Emilia-Romagna region and President of AREFLH, asked the attending speakers to share their views on how Producer Organisation and the F&V scheme can be further reinforced.

MEP Clara Aguilera recalled that the F&V CMO has proven to be a successful and cost-effective tool that needs to be further consolidated through a better concentration of the supply, a crucial step if we wish to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

Questioned on how Producer

successful tool that needs to be preserved

Speakers, prompted by the moderator,

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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Organisations can make the most out of the currently available risk management and prevention tools under the F&V CMO scheme, Jean-Louis Moulon, President of AREFLH's College of Producers and Luc Vanoirbeek, President of the F&V working group of Copa Cogeca, focused on the threats posed by climate change and phytosanitary emergencies, emphasising that the CMO is indeed a remarkable tool but cannot be considered to be as the solution for all problems: the F&V sector still requires a broader support from other CAP mechanisms.

Finally, the chair also queried the speakers on the crucial need to address trade and R&D policies in the F&V sector: Maria Teresa Cháfer Náchter, director-general for agriculture of the Valencia Region stressed the need to review the current European trade policy to ensure that EU farmers are able to compete on a level playing field with producers from third countries and advocated for more funds dedicated to research and innovation in the F&V sector.

In her concluding remarks, Simona Caselli stated: "The F&V CMO has repeatedly proved itself as an incredibly

and bolstered in the future CAP.

"There is however a pressing need to reinforce its crisis prevention and management tools in order to better face the challenges posed by climate change and phytosanitary emergencies."

The third and last session focused on the place of Geographical Indications (GIs) in the future CAP framework.

Claude Vermot-Desroches, President of OriGIIn moderated the round table. He set forth AREPO and OriGIIn common demands under the new CAP as well as the main results achieved in assuring the right support to GI under rural development and strengthening their protection in quality regulation.

Jérémy Decerle MEP co-shadow rapporteur on the Amending Regulation, reminded that the newly elected European Parliament will strengthen the work initiated by the past legislation concerning GIs.

"The EU should bring back its agriculture to a central stage and GIs can help in this process".

remarked the importance of geographical indications for their regions and producers, in terms of economic and rural development and competitiveness.

Begoña García Bernal, regional minister for agriculture and rural development for Extremadura, stated that we should simplify the access to GI system for small producers, without threatening the specific characteristics that define its unique quality, namely the human factor and the link with the territory.

Jean-Pierre Raynaud, vice-president of Nouvelle-Aquitaine region in charge of Agriculture, and Marco Remaschi, regional minister for agriculture of Toscana Region, further stressed the essential role of the human factor and the link with the territory in bringing to life otherwise marginal areas and preserving cultural traditions in places that would otherwise have seen depopulation and the disappearance of agricultural land, landscapes and production.