



“my agriculture – our choice”

Basic paper and demands

For a new agricultural policy: Farms not agroindustries

The European Union's agricultural policy is sick. It's initial goal had been to provide the citizens of the Union with healthy food at affordable prices and to guarantee farmers with adequate prices. Today this common agricultural policy causes, at considerable expenses of European taxpayers overproduction, wastage, ecological and social damage, regional sclerosis, deprivation of health and taste and alienation. It depends on noxious imports and subsidizes harmful exports. Instead of optimizing health and diversity of agricultural products it subsidizes and privileges a small number of large scale agricultural enterprises and agro-industrial corporations. This policy puts farmers inside and outside the EU out of business at an alarming rate.

The consequence of our dominant concept of our agriculture and food production, “the more and the cheaper the better” is the wastage of 30% of our food and a constant decline of appreciation of value and quality of our food. Consumers are incapacitated and children are actively instigated to malnourishment.

Competition and price pressure and the economic mantra of “grow or perish” forces farmers into strategies of intensification and expansion, which creates losers only. Survival on the market takes a high social and human toll. Nature protection and environment, respect for creatures, family values, craftsmanship, village communities, traditions and cultural landscapes all fall on the wayside, as does appreciation of society for farming.

Instead of addressing the causes, the CAP since long is trying in vain to mitigate and compensate for the consequences of its very own policies. Farmers are being humiliated as beggars for subsidies, taxpayers are burdened with expenses, missing at other ends. Farmers and consumers are being played off against each other, while there are unique chances and a broad public willingness to take responsibility for diverse, healthy and enjoyable nurture and food culture, for shaping cultural landscapes and for opening new perspectives of live in the countryside.

The ecological and economic challenges of the decades to come are formidable and irrefutable. Feeding the world according to the European model would require the resources of more than two planets earth and at the same time destroy the livelihoods of billions of people. There is no economic, ecological, social, political and ethical justification for such an approach.

The willingness and knowledge, the technological and financial means are at our command. All we miss is the political will to shape the market and implement the necessary policies. The Common agricultural policy of the European Union deserves new goals and democratic fundament. We must not let the chances of the CAP reform after 2013 pass by.

1) Global implementation of the human right to healthy food

Worldwide, a billion people suffer from hunger another billion from malnutrition while more than one billion people are obese. The top priority of European agricultural policy must be feeding all its citizens well and healthy while using no more resources than sustainably available for every one of the seven (soon nine) billion citizens of the world. We must satisfy our needs from our own agricultural area. Today the European Union's agricultural imports and exports sum up to a deficit of 35 million hectares. At the

same time subsidized exports to poor countries threaten their self-supply as well as the livelihoods of small farmers.

- **Stop, not subsidise all exports threatening small farmers in developing countries**
- **Prevent cheap imports of agricultural commodities, especially for meat and fuel production**
- **Fair prices for imported agricultural goods**

2) Agriculture must pay off for farmers and consumers

Sustainable agriculture and good quality require cost-covering prices. To this end the bargaining power of farmers and consumers on the market needs to be strengthened. We want demand-oriented production and processing of food at regional level. We need qualified, tradition rooted and innovative farmers and processors who can be trusted. We don't want to lose a single farm in Europe any more.

- **Support instead of discrimination of farmer based operations and labor, no subsidies for big business!**
- **Direct payments should compensate environmental and social services and be coupled with the number of employees**
- **Prevent overproduction, waste and price deterioration through control of quantities by producers and consumers**
- **Minimum wages and anti-dumping laws in agriculture**

3) Healthy animals for a healthy diet

Animal welfare, healthy nutrition, climate change and resource scarcity all require a reversal of our present animal husbandry and meat consumption. It should be guided by the agricultural area available as well as respect for the dignity of creatures.

- **No more subsidies to industrial animal production**
- **Protein plants for feed must be produced in Europe again, maintenance of grasslands**
- **Respect dignity of animals and prohibit cruelty in husbandry and breeding**

4) Diversity, not monocultures

Maintaining the diversity of cultural landscapes, cultivated plant and animal species of Europe and stopping further loss of biodiversity is a question of survival in times of climate change.

- **Improve diversity, minimum crop rotation and maintain grassland on all farms**
- **Systematically reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides**
- **Systematically support agro-ecological solutions and organic agriculture**

5) Climate change and solar agriculture

We have to reduce our climate gas emissions within the coming decades by 80%, also in agriculture. This requires overcoming dependency of our nourishment from oil and mineral fertilizers, adaptation of meat production and consumption and increased carbon sequestration through humus building in crop land and grassland. Industrial scale replacement of fossil fuels by agro-fuels is not an alternative.

- **Decentralized, efficient and integrated rural energy production instead of monocultures for fuel and energy**
- **Support and require maximum energy and climate efficiency and replenishment of humus in soil**

6) Innovation versus risky and monopolized technologies

We refuse the introduction of high risk technologies such as genetic engineering into agriculture. Farmers competence and holistic research approaches should be the basis of innovation. Converting nature into a "bio-factory" is not a strategy for the future.

- **Prohibit the use of genetically modified plants, patented creatures and cloned animals**
- **Develop a research strategy that is based on farmers and consumers needs and the addresses the grand ecological challenges and ensure that its results are shared and distributed fairly and are open to critical public assessment**