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Battle against eutrophication requires reformed CAP

The EU Common Agricultural Policy is constantly changing. A new policy will be in place from 2021 and the reform has started. The Stockholm University Baltic Sea Centre (project Baltic Eye) recognises the importance of a thorough reform of the CAP to combat eutrophication. A future CAP should contribute to reducing the risk of nutrient leakage from arable land. This can be achieved by increased nutrient use efficiency, through improved fertiliser management and better regional balance between livestock density and fodder production.¹

The policy tool CAP operates alongside economic incentives and legal requirements. In an ideal world, the external environmental impact of nutrient leakage from arable land would be fully internalised in the economic system and polluter pays principle implemented. The present situation is far from this. Therefore, the following important steps could create a new and better CAP from 2021:

Respecting the planetary boundaries should be the central objective of the CAP

A future CAP must deliver in accordance with EU and national obligations, such as UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the EU Biodiversity Goals. To meet future food security demands, the agriculture production systems must change radically. Presently they do not operate within the planetary boundaries and put unsustainable pressure on for instance water, soils and biodiversity. Four of nine planetary boundaries have now been crossed as a result of human activity. The four are: climate change, loss of biosphere integrity, land-system change, and altered biogeochemical cycles (phosphorus and nitrogen).² Without functioning ecosystems there will be no future sustainable food production.

¹ Nesme T, Senthilkumar K, Mollier A, Pellerin S (2015) Effects of crop and livestock segregation on phosphorus resource use: a systematic, regional analysis. *Eur J Agron* 71:88–95.
doi:10.1016/j.eja.2015.08.001,

Salomon, E., and M. Sundberg. 2012. Implementation and status of priority measures to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus leakage. Report 405. JTI - Swedish Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering, Uppsala, Sweden

² Steffen et al. 2015. Planetary Boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet. *Science* Vol. 347 no. 6223

To combat eutrophication –support to production that balances animal density with arable land

It should be mandatory for the member states to offer CAP support promoting:

- Livestock production that balances animal density with arable land and produces a greater proportion of the feed locally in order to optimise manure handling and reduce the risk of nutrient losses.
- Support farm investment for improved storage, handling, and transport of manure;
- Support education of farm advisors and farmers about nutrient management;
- Require nutrient balances at farm/field level.

Shift from income support such as market support, direct support etc to funding for public goods.

Currently, most of the CAP budget is spent on direct payments with few specific requirements beyond compliance with EU and national laws. In addition, the distribution of funds is skewed both between and within member states, for historical reasons and generally in favour of the richest farming regions. This must change. Substantial funds must be shifted from direct support to pay for public goods.

The present rural development programmes, RDP, is as close to funding for public goods as the CAP achieves today. RDP is a good starting point for a future CAP but substantially more funding is needed.

Greening component has not delivered expected environmental benefits

The last CAP reform introduced a so called greening component, i.e. 30 % of direct support will only be paid to the farmers if a number of “green” requirements are fulfilled. A number of research studies have shown that the greening has not delivered environmental benefits but increased the complexity of the CAP resulting in more administration and control.³ If the

³ <http://www.ufz.de/index.php?en=35272>

<http://ieep.eu/work-areas/agriculture-and-land-management/policy-evaluation/2016/12/ecological-focus-areas-what-impacts-on-biodiversity>

Hart K, Baldock D, Buckwell A (2016), Learning the lessons of the Greening of the CAP, a report for the UK Land Use Policy Group in collaboration with the European Nature Conservation Agencies Network, Institute for European Environmental Policy, London.

http://www.ieep.eu/assets/2028/Learning_the_lessons_from_CAP_greening_-_April_2016_-_final.pdf

greening component is retained, it must deliver in accordance with the goals mentioned in the paragraph above.

Integrate the WFD in the CAP

The Water Framework Directive is an important legislative tool for eutrophication issues. The cohesion between WFD and the CAP must increase. One example of cohesion is to use the estimated cost of actions to increase water quality in the WFD to develop accurate CAP measures.

More research is needed

Finally; in order to develop an agricultural policy contributing to combating for instance eutrophication, *more research* on CAP impact on the environment is urgently needed. This requires full transparency and access to data such as CAP subsidies.

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