

Webinar with Member States on Farm Advisory Systems – 21/10/2020

LTT Introduction Pierre Bascou

- It is my pleasure to welcome you to this webinar.
- This webinar is timely and important for several reasons:
 - The first one is linked to the fact that farming is becoming **increasingly more complex** as the activity of agricultural production is changing very rapidly;
 - Farmers are faced with an increasing number of challenges of various nature: climatic, economic, environmental, social and sanitary, for which they need to have access to better knowledge and new techniques and technologies
 - This knowledge exists and I believe that it is fair to say that never before we have seen such a wealth of new knowledge and information so widely available: related to agronomy, business management and markets, IT (artificial intelligence, block chain, robotics etc.).
- Against this background, farmers must be supported in better understanding the world in which they operate and they must be supported in having better access to the tools that will help them to tackle these challenges, in particular environmental and climatic. **And there farm advice has a fundamental role to play.**
- **The CAP has addressed the question of farm advice** since 2007 with the obligation for MSs to make available advice by helping farmers to better understand the legal requirements they faced.

- But **the FAS is not the only response**. The **second pillar of the CAP** allows MSs to provide for funding advisory activities and links between research and advice through a new instrument, the European Innovation Partnership (EIP). **Market policy instruments (in sectors like wine, fruits & vegetables)** also include certain advisory components. All that constitute an “advisory package” in the current CAP.
- Looking ahead the **future CAP** will put more emphasis in the objectives and design of its policy framework on supporting farmers in tackling new challenges (environment and climate, price volatility, ...) and innovation, including the use of new technologies. MSs will have more leeway to adapt their implementation of the CAP to their needs and situations. In that respect **advice will need to be better integrated with research, knowledge exchange networks and the farming community** through the concept of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS). MSs will program their AKIS in their CAP Strategic Plans, which will be approved by the Commission. **The scope of advice will also need to be enlarged** to all issues addressed in the Strategic Plans, including priority issues such as environment, climate change, anti-microbial resistance, risk management, etc.
- In this rapidly evolving world, advisory services will therefore be **even more important in the future CAP than now**. It is all the more important that advice will be **key if we want to meet the**

Green Deal targets (including those from the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies). The discussions in the European Parliament and the Council on the future CAP are encouraging in this respect since both **co-legislators agree that advice will be key** for a successful future CAP.

- **But to fully deliver, it is important to take stock of the current experience with the FAS,** discuss what went well and what could be improved. Your feedback will be precious for that purpose and I expect interesting discussions and conclusions from this webinar.
- It is a long time since a seminar devoted to the FAS was not organised with MSs. **This is the right moment to do it.** Unfortunately while planned in Budapest in March (thanks for the HU authorities to have accepted that responsibility at that time), it had to be postponed and made virtual due to the Covid Pandemic.
- We in DG AGRI organise it jointly **with the JRC-Ispra and I want to thank them** for this long-standing collaboration on this very important topic.
- I welcome you and wish you a successful webinar!