

Food and Farming: Time to Choose!



Campaign for sustainable farming and food



Friends of the Earth UK, Friends of the Earth Scotland



■ Campaign for sustainable farming and food

Food and Farming in Europe has to change: current food and farming policies do not deliver healthy food. Our soils, air and water are polluted by intensive agriculture. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union (EU) is meant to support farmers and subsidise quality food production.

It doesn't.

Most of the 40 billion Euro that the EU spends each year on the CAP, promotes the industrialisation of farming and environmental pollution. Most of the money is given to big farmers and agri-business: 70% of CAP subsidies go to only 20% of farmers. Exports, funded by CAP money, hurt developing countries by outcompeting local producers.

Join in!

Friends of the Earth are campaigning for sustainable agriculture and for real food. Join in and help us get the message across to politicians, agribusiness and supermarkets



■ What's in the Meat? Beef, pork, poultry and eggs

Intensive meat and poultry production is not sustainable. Factory farms stock animals at excessive levels. The surplus waste (containing nitrates and bacteria) contaminates our water. Animal factory farming is a source of emissions that contribute to global warming, ozone depletion and acid rain.

Intensive meat production is highly inefficient. For each kilo of beef, 5kg of high protein feedstuff is needed. Europe imports 55 million tons of feedstuffs every year from Brazil, Thailand and other Southern countries, taking up land which could be used more efficiently to produce much needed food for human consumption. The food was 'for people, for children. Now they plant soya for the pigs in Europe,' says João Claudio, a farmer from Brazil.

The use of antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed, can decrease the effectiveness of essential medicines for humans. Has there been any food scandal over the last years that was not related to the factory farming of meat and eggs?



The CAP supports factory farming by giving headage payments for beef and by providing export subsidies for pigs, beef and poultry. The system of headage payments encourages farmers to intensify production. Livestock payments should instead be linked to the size of the farm, to ensure that the soil is not overburdened by animal manure. Mixed farms should be promoted.

Live animals are transported all over the world, resulting in animal suffering. The CAP even actively promotes this by granting live animal export subsidies, rather than discouraging overproduction in the first place.

■ Are fruits healthy? CAP funding destruction

About half of the fruit and vegetables in our shops contain measurable pesticide residues. Fresh fruit and vegetables are essential in a healthy diet, but they would be a lot more healthy without pesticide residues. Pesticides have been linked to effects such as behavioural disorders, weakened immune systems, damaged hormone systems and cancer

Yearly, the EU spends 2 billion Euro to 'support' the production of fruits and vegetables. Why isn't this money used to minimise pesticide use and deliver healthy food?

Instead, the EU has been obsessed with standardizing the fruit sector at the expense of local varieties. Over 2300 apple varieties exist in Northern Europe, but how many do we see in the shop?

In 1990 an EU Regulation came into force that provides that apples with less than a minimum diameter of 55 mm may no longer be sold as an apple. As a result, tons of apples were destroyed and massive amounts of pesticides and fertilizer are used to produce the 'blown-up' spotless apples that are favoured by the EU. In France, CAP aid worth 5.216 euros per hectare will be used to destroy thousands of hectares of fruit orchards. The EU claims that this is necessary to 'enhance the quality of french products' and 'cut total fruit production'.



■ Olives: paying the polluters

Olives have the potential to be an ecologically sustainable crop, but CAP policy is rewarding olive farmers for intensifying production. Replanting olive crops intensively destroys old olive grove environments and their beneficial effects such as encouraging biodiversity. The variety of habitats in traditional olive groves disappears and overuse of pesticides and herbicides severely affects insects and consequently the survival of birds. These intensive farming methods badly affect biodiversity and cause soil erosion, leading farmers to use even more fertiliser. Topsoil,

fertiliser and herbicides are then washed into water systems, causing pollution. Intensification also leads to olive farming using irrigation in areas where water is already scarce.



■ Unhealthy CAP: Tobacco

Tobacco doesn't exactly feed people, but the crop receives more Euros subsidy per hectare than any other crop in CAP (nearly 7,000 Euro per hectare). Most of this low quality tobacco is exported to non-EU countries. Meanwhile, the EU is increasing efforts and

funding to encourage citizens to refrain from smoking. Serious environmental costs associated with tobacco farming include deforestation, erosion and desertification, and the high amounts of pesticides used in growing tobacco.

■ How Food and Farming Policies should change

Eco-Conditionality for all CAP payments

CAP support must be made conditional on the environmental performance by farmers. A single basic premium for all sustainably managed farm areas should replace the current hectare and headage payments.

Encourage localisation instead of globalisation

The new CAP should no longer subsidize the conquering of world markets, but instead should give priority to local and regional trade. Export subsidies have to be abolished.

More money for Rural Development

A larger share of the CAP should go to protecting the rural environment and livelihood. This means support for organic farming, maintaining nature and biodiversity, promotion of local varieties and rebuilding local processing and marketing facilities.

Prioritize small and sustainable farms

CAP support to large farms has to be drastically reduced in favour of small and sustainable farms.

Green tax reform

A green tax reform should remove some of the tax burden on labour, and introduce and gradually increase taxes on transport and chemical inputs (eco-taxation).

Bring the food and agrochemical business under control.

The food chain today is dominated by a small number of supermarkets, and agri- and food business that are imposing their own interests on society. As a result, consumers increasingly buy standardized products transported from all over the world, at the expense of local diversity and local farmers. The EU should develop policies to enforce corporate accountability and prevent market domination.

■ You are what you eat

Buy local, buy sustainably produced and organic products, and buy food that is in season.

Organic farming is an approach to agriculture where the aim is to create environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural systems. Better for the environment, better for animals and better for you.

Maximum reliance is put on self-regulating farm eco-systems and locally or farm derived renewable resources. The use of artificial



chemicals is reduced as far as possible. Organic farms usually have more biodiversity than conventional farms.

Supporting local produce and local farmers' markets helps strengthen the connection between consumers, food and farmers. Farmers markets allow consumers to have contact with farmers and learn to appreciate the link between farming and the food they eat. Local production and distribution encourages biodiversity in agriculture, reduces energy-consuming transport and helps to strengthen local economies and local communities. Localisation of the food chain brings power back to the hands of farmers and consumers.





■ You can make a difference

Support local farmers' markets, buy locally produced organic foods, and eat less meat to help create a high quality and healthy farming system and a greener countryside.

Tell your supermarket that you want organic food at a fair price for you and the farmers who supply them. Tell them you want to buy local varieties and food from farms in the region.

Go to our website and join in our on-line actions to tell politicians and supermarkets what you think. Join the Friends of the Earth local group in your area and become part of the movement for bringing diversity, taste and health back to our plates!

www.choosefoodchoosefarming.org

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