

« Agriculture & Progress » Platform event in the European Parliament under the patronage of MEP Anne Sander (p.2)

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> Editorial : Green Deal and CAP

The scale of the Green Deal project initiated by the von der Leyen Commission is comparable to the creation of the Grand European market under the aegis of Jacques Delors. But the Green Deal has - unlike the Single Market - a revolutionary dimension because it aims to impose on our society a new paradigm: carbon neutrality.

Such a project will require a political vision and daring, a lot of daring. This renewed ambition must extend to the Common Agricultural Policy. The usual five-year grooming is no longer adapted. The carbon adjustment tax at the EU's border should favour virtuous sectors, notably agriculture and forestry, which provide society with a green lung.

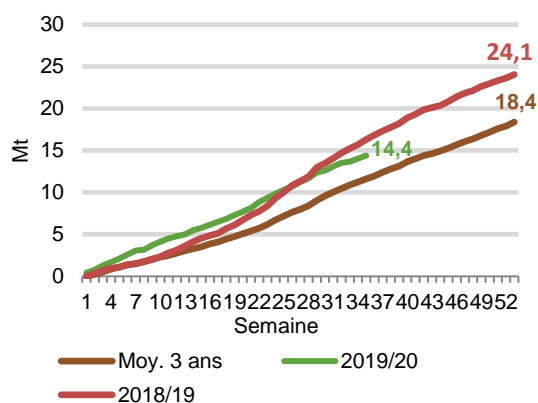
The Coronavirus is yet another reason to finally obtain the dismantling of the WTO agreements allowing imports of cereal substitutes into the Union, or even to reconsider the method of calculating customs duties at the entry into the EU, and to consider that the Union's budget must be increased to rise up to the issues and challenges currently facing the Union.

Céline Duroc

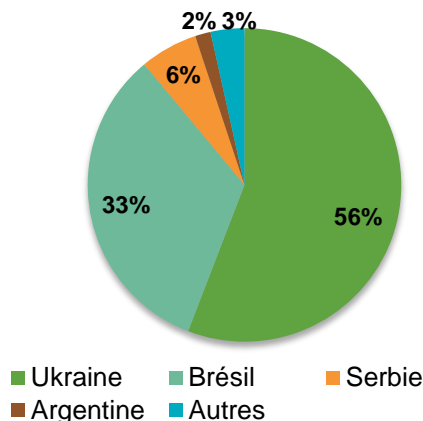
**CEPM Permanent Delegate,
AGPM Director General**

MAIZE KEY FIGURES:

Cumulated EU maize imports from 1 July 2019 to 1 March 2020



Origin of EU maize imports from 1 July 2019 to 1 March 2020



AGRICULTURE & PROGRESS EVENT AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On 23 January 2020, the first session of the educational cycle of events of the Platform was held in the European Parliament on the theme « Integrated Pest Management and plant protection – Matching ambition, realism and innovation in the Farm-to-Fork Strategy » under the patronage of MEP Anne Sander (European People's Party Group).

The debate showcased the efforts already made by the maize sector to implement IPM in practice, as well as the ambition and willingness to continue and further develop sustainable agricultural practices as allies of an ecological and technological transition. The speakers therefore stressed the need for science-based innovation and a clear and solid regulatory framework taking into account the agricultural reality and practices.

Anne Sander opened the conference by emphasising the importance of European agriculture as one of the best performing and sustainable worldwide. She recalled the recent decision of the European Parliament regarding the European Green Deal, in which the EPP called for a fair and adequate budget for the CAP which *“must have the means to achieve its ambition. The budget must be equal to its environmental objectives”*.

Céline Duroc representing CEPM (founding member of the platform) presented how via prevention, monitoring and intervention the maize sector tries to manage the fight against diseases, weeds and pests. However, she stressed that *“we must protect our crops to prevent a degradation*

of yields and their sustainability”. *“When we lose solutions we can easily find ourselves in a technical dead end! The solutions we want to implement depend on the ability to have a toolbox that is as complete as possible.”* She insisted that innovative solutions require an appropriate regulatory framework, notably for NBTs. Her remarks were shared by Alex Krick (Deputy Secretary General of the International Confederation of European Sugar Beet Growers – CIBE).

Franck Laborde (Secretary General of AGPM) and Alexandre Quillet (Chair of the French Sugar Beet Technical Institute – ITB) then demonstrated with concrete examples the challenges they are facing in the field and how through innovative and flexible solutions they deal with them. Both however, also stressed the rapidly growing risk of facing technological deadlocks.

CEPM is very satisfied with this first breakfast, which allowed bringing together around 60 MEPs and stakeholders. At this moment, the other two events (on NBTs and Climate) are postponed in view of the recent developments but will take place in 2020.

NEW GENOMIC TECHNIQUES : THE FIGHT HAS STARTED

The Council has asked the European Commission to address the issue of the new biotechnologies following the ECJ decision of July 2019 - The Commission is launching an impact assessment, the results of which will be made public in April 2021.

As a representative organisation at the European level (through its participation in 5 Civil Dialogue Groups), the CEPM was one of the organisations invited by DG Sante in the framework of the consultation launched in March 2020 on NGTs (new genomic techniques, formerly NBT for new breeding techniques), techniques identified by the ruling of the ECJ as “new” compared to the release of the 2001 "GMO" Directive, which is therefore almost 20 years old! These techniques were identified by the ECJ as falling under the GMO Directive, but the concrete application of this decision raises a large number of questions. Starting with the capacity of the European Union to access innovations made possible by some of these techniques, even though they provide answers that cannot be dissociated from the evolutions produced by nature through natural mutations.

CEPM will therefore invest in this issue by responding to the Commission's request to highlight, beyond the evidence of an

adapted regulatory framework, the capacity of European producers to be able to use all genetic resources in the future to meet the major challenges facing them: feeding, adapting to climate change and induced constraints (e.g. pests and diseases), contributing to its mitigation through carbon storage or the replacement of fossil fuels in particular. The other major focus of CEPM's attention will be on the risks of distortion of competition in a context where Europe has become the world's leading importer of maize: the regulations must be based on science and allow for a level-playing field between European producers and their competitors in the rest of the world, and at the very least protect our producers from imports that do not comply with the rules imposed on them. However, it is clear that the current regulatory framework has completely failed on this point!

DELAYED PUBLICATION OF THE “FARM TO FORK” STRATEGY

On 25 March, the European Commission was supposed to officially publish its "Farm to Fork" Strategy, one of the pillars of the new European Green Deal. However, due to the coronavirus, the EU agenda was lightened and the publication of this strategy was postponed to 29 April at the earliest. This strategy is co-piloted by the services in charge of health and food safety (DG SANTE), and by the services in charge of agriculture and rural development (DG AGRI). A public consultation period was open from 17 February to 16 March on the roadmap of the Strategy and gathered 654 comments.

Several versions of the text have already been circulated in the European press since mid-January, including working versions reflecting the state of the debate between the different Commission services. Disagreements between DG SANTE and DG AGRI should be mentioned in particular concerning the notion of the objective of pesticide reduction (reduction of pesticide risk for DG AGRI, reduction of pesticide use for DG SANTE) and the quantification of the objective itself (in the annotated leaked versions of the document, these objectives are described as "now impossible to change" and it is added that it is too late to now "limit the scope"), and the vocabulary associated with new genomic techniques (NGT) (in particular, the mention of the concept of "innovation" or the reference to the "potential for improving the sustainability of the food chain" in this context).

As a Communication, the text of the Strategy is not legally binding, however, it will contain references to future legislative initiatives, in particular:

- Inclusion of chemical pesticide and fertiliser reduction targets in CAP national strategic plans
- Revision of certain provisions of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive

- Legislative initiatives to reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers
- Revision of the legislative framework on seeds and integration of sustainability criteria
- Amendments to feed regulations to better take into account products of the bio-economy and integrate the concept of "green claims".
- Development of an "EU Carbon Handbook" to quantify emission reductions and carbon removals on farms to support payments via the CAP or private initiatives.

Since 2017, the EU has become the world's largest importer of maize, and there is an urgent need to protect the sector from these massive imports, which weigh on prices while not respecting the same production standards as those existing in the EU. For CEPM, the "Farm to Fork" strategy should not be a source of additional constraints in the future policies that will be defined. It should also include indicators to assess how agricultural competitiveness, income and the remuneration of new services are improving, as well as the overall indirect effects of this policy on the environment and food safety.

Maize producers are committed to more sustainable production, which will require continued access to efficient means of production (genetics, crop protection, irrigation) that respect the environment and maintain the competitiveness of farms. While CEPM is committed to reducing the risks and impacts associated with the use of synthetic plant protection products and fertilizers, we believe that the arbitrary and regulatory setting of often unattainable reduction targets is inappropriate.

COMMISSION POSTPONES CDG EVALUATION

On 13 March 2020, the European Commission (DG AGRI) was supposed to organise an extraordinary meeting of the Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs) to which the General Secretaries of the CDG member associations and the chairs of the various CDGs were invited. The aim of this meeting was to present

the study subcontracted by the Commission to a consultant in 2019, which aimed to present the assessment of the CDGs after 5 years of existence, as well as the possibilities for improving the system for the next renewal cycle. However, this meeting was cancelled due to the coronavirus epidemic.

MAIZE MYCOTOXINS : A WORKSHOP TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT IS AT STAKE

A symposium was organized by AGPM in France, in the town of Mont de Marsan, in the framework of the Sino-European MycoKey project. This project, which benefits from European H2020 funding, involves CEPM in its membership. This symposium was organized on the theme "Mycotoxins in maize: knowing and understanding their development for better agronomic management". It brought together around fifty participants, technicians from the maize industry and farmers.

The participants were able to learn about Arvalis's latest work on the subject, and follow the debates of a round table bringing together various stakeholders in the industry on the issues related to health protection.



APPR CONGRESS

On 5 and 6 February, the APPR held its annual congress, bringing together a large audience with a large number of institutional and professional speakers. CEPM and ARVALIS intervened during this event to highlight the political priorities of European maize producers and to highlight the many technical challenges to be met by maize production.

During this congress, Mr Sitaru was elected President of the APPR, with Mr Perrein remaining within the association as Vice-President for this new mandate. Beyond the traditional Golden Corn Award, the APPR has launched a new and very original initiative: a great national football championship focused on its members!



CEPM Members

GERMANY – *Deutsches Maiskomitee (DMK)*

BULGARIA - *National Grain Producers Association (NGPA) et Conseil des Organisations Agricoles*

SPAIN - *Asociacion General de Productores de Maíz de España (AGPME)*

FRANCE – *Association Générale des Producteurs de Maïs (AGPM)*

HUNGARY – *Vetőmag Szövetség Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktanács (VSZT)*

ITALY - *Associazione Italiana Maiscoltori (AMI)*

POLAND - *Polski Związek Producentów Kukurydzy (PZPK)*

PORTUGAL – *ANPROMIS*

ROMANIA - *Association Roumaine des Producteurs de Maïs (APPR)*

SLOVAKIA - *Zväz pestovateľov a spracovateľov kukurice (ZPSK)*

