

Newsletter CEPM

LES DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES DE LA PRODUCTION EUROPÉENNE DE MAÏS • THE LATEST NEWS IN EUROPEAN MAIZE PRODUCTION



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State of play of the negotiations for the future of the CAP (p.2)

> Editorial : Rotation at the plot level, a cascade of negative effects

The number of "false good ideas" in Brussels is definitely increasing. After "Taxonomy", which stigmatises agriculture by describing it as unsustainable, the obligation of plot rotation in the CAP is another example of the disconnect between the Community's circles and the agronomic and economic reality.

While rotation is a reality on most farms, it is a constant concern for the maize sector, which is struggling to make its specificities understood. With plot-based rotation - which decision-makers appear to consider as the superior solution - there would be cascading effects that are the exact opposite of the goal.

The first and most visible effect would be a massive reduction in production. In France, for example, the reduction is estimated at 20% of corn and 15% of silage maize production. The loss would be even greater for seed maize (around 40%), all at a time when Ukraine has just been granted equivalence to export its seed to the EU, and European self-sufficiency in maize is shrinking year after year.

This drastic reduction in production will have major effects on the downstream sectors, starting with animal feed. It should not be forgotten that the maize produced on farms is used to feed the poultry, pigs or cattle on the farms or via feed factories. In addition to the very significant loss of income that would result, major job losses would be expected in certain areas, as well as the undermining of short-distance transport, one of the key principles of sustainable agriculture.

Last but not least, the loss of maize acreage would have to be compensated for by replacement crops, but again with environmental damage because maize - and everyone should know this - is a crop with low plant protection use and one of the most efficient crops for carbon storage and water management. In addition, maize has historically been at the forefront of innovation in bioresources for bio-plastics and bio-ethanol in particular.

I have always heard that you should never change a winning team. In this case, it's the opposite: by changing a single parameter, you destroy the entire ecosystem for the benefit of no one, except for international competitors.

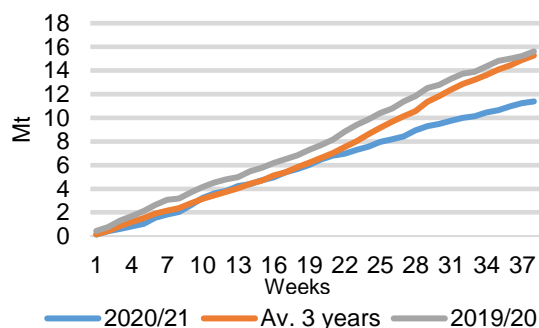
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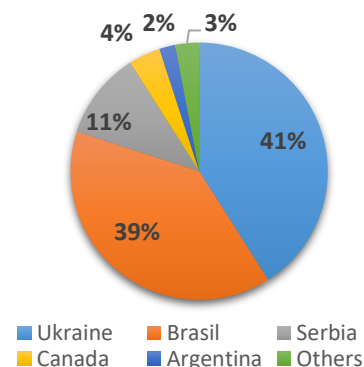
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MAIZE KEY FIGURES:

Cumulative European imports of corn from 01/07/2020 to 22/03/2021



Origin of European imports of corn from 01/07/2020 to 22/03/2021



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STATE OF PLAY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CAP

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is divided into three legislative texts, dealing specifically with the strategic plans, horizontal governance and the common market organisation (CMO) of the EU's agricultural policy. The reform of the EU's main agricultural programme is currently at the trilogue stage, which means that inter-institutional negotiations are underway between the Portuguese Presidency, on behalf of EU ministers, and MEPs. Although the Portuguese Presidency is the sole interlocutor for each dossier, the European Parliament is represented in the discussions by a negotiator for each dossier, conducting separate negotiations.

The Portuguese Presidency has called a "super-trilogue" to address the three pillars of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform on 26 March. According to the Portuguese Presidency, this "super trilogue" was necessary for a full and systematic evaluation of the three regulations that make up the CAP reform.

The latest trilogue was marked by heightened tensions between the negotiators of the different institutions. For example, Member States, including France and Germany, issued a diplomatic paper asking the Commission to drop its request for additional monitoring and evaluation data on Member States' performance under the new CAP. The Member States are asking that "no additional data be required" from EU governments beyond a list of indicators in an annex to the CAP strategic plans regulation.

The final objective for the Portuguese Presidency is to reach a consensus on the three aspects of the CAP by May 2021 - an objective that remains uncertain because the most political topics, particularly those linked to the green architecture (conditionality of aid and the future eco-regime), have been postponed until the end of the negotiations.

At the same time, CEPM is working with the trilogues negotiators to put forward its arguments, particularly on the recognition of equivalence measures for crop rotation at the plot level.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament is about to publish a document explaining 19 of its more than 200 amendments to the Common Market Organisation (CMO) regulation, one of the three regulations that make up the CAP reform. The paper was requested by the Portuguese Presidency following the latest trilogue on the CMO.

In the paper, MEPs call for the Commission to have more regulatory powers and focus more on market stabilisation, transparency and fair farm incomes. The changes would allow food companies already able to form cartels to extend their privileges to "their entire sector" of activity for a given period. Also included are amendments to impose sustainability guarantees for third country imports, and several additions would also strengthen protections for sugar, sugar beet and sugar cane producers.

TOWARDS A REVISION OF THE SEWAGE SLUDGE DIRECTIVE?

Since spring 2020, the European Commission has been engaged in an evaluation exercise of the Sewage Sludge Directive (Directive 86/278/EEC), including the use of sewage sludge in agriculture. A [public consultation](#) was open until 5 March 2021 to collect comments on the application of this Directive - the results of this evaluation exercise will be known in the 3rd quarter of 2021, as well as the Commission's conclusions for the next steps. The Commission has already received 68 comments from civil society on the roadmap for the evaluation of the Directive. The Commission's objective is to assess the added value and effectiveness of this Directive, as well as its coherence with other EU legislation on the use of wastewater, fertilisers, nitrates, etc. In the framework of the Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Commission will study the opportunity of a revision of the Directive for a better alignment with other European policies.

NEWS FROM THE AGRICULTURE & PROGRESS PLATFORM SINCE THE START OF THE YEAR

Building on its 2020 activities, the Agriculture & Progress platform (of which CEPM is a founding member) is continuing its activities on key issues to continue to promote innovation for the future of European agriculture, taking into account the needs and possibilities of a committed sector.

In this context, the platform has strongly positioned itself at the beginning of the year in the ongoing discussions in the European Parliament on the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Biodiversity Strategy 2030, where the reports are being prepared by the various parliamentary committees, led by the AGRI and ENVI committees.

As a reminder, as announced in the Green Deal programme in December 2019, these two important European strategies were published on 20 May 2020 by the European Commission and are presented as a roadmap for new initiatives on the preservation and protection of biodiversity and on the establishment of a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. The strategies also contain some concrete targets at this stage, including a 50% reduction in pesticide use; a 20% reduction in fertiliser use; a 50% reduction in sales of antimicrobials used in agriculture; and a target of 25% of agricultural land in organic farming.

In the spirit of education, the members of the platform prepared a series of amendment proposals in support of its mission: to give the agricultural and primary food processing industry a tool to provide society and decision-makers with answers and suggestions on the needs and challenges of ensuring sustainable agricultural production and to highlight the important role of innovation in this context.

On this basis, various contacts were made with key members of the committees involved in this process. The vote on the final reports in the AGRI and ENVI committees is expected to take place in April, but there will still be a lot of discussion to find agreements between the two committees. A vote in plenary is planned for June.

FINAL STEPS BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF THE 2030 CLIMATE PACKAGE

As already mentioned in previous newsletters, the European Union has raised its climate ambitions with the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, which requires a reduction of at least 55% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (or even 60%, according to the European Parliament), compared to 1990 emissions.

In order to be achieved, this intermediate target for 2030 requires a series of revisions to the main legislative instruments in the energy and environment sector. Among the texts to be revised in the 'June 2021 Package' are the following two texts which have a strong impact on the agricultural sector: the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation (LULUCF), and the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II). Although both were recently adopted in 2018, they will be revised again so that the Commission can set out its ambitions for 2030.

In June 2021, the Commission is likely to propose amendments to the REDII articles on transport, buildings, and sustainability criteria for bio-energy, as well as new provisions on fuel certification. As part of the review, in order to meet the EU's new 2030 climate targets, the ambition of REDII will need to be increased to at least 38-40% of the energy mix in 2030 (instead of 32% in the current REDII) and to increase the share of renewable energy in transport (currently 14% in REDII) to more than 24%, according to the European Commission's impact assessment. A [public consultation](#), to which CEPM responded, was organised on the revision of RED II until 9 February 2021, as well as workshops to which civil society is invited. A [public consultation](#) was also open until 5 February 2021 on the revision of the LULUCF Regulation.

CEPM is working on this issue in partnership with the European Biofuels Platform. CEPM is defending the place of corn bioethanol in the face of the risk of seeing first-generation biofuels marginalised, and the end of a never-ending race for sustainability, with a rather decreasing focus.

APPR ANNUAL CONGRESS IN ROMANIA

The APPR Annual Congress raised a series of key questions at this turning point for the future of the European agriculture, seeking answers from policy makers from DG Agri, the European Parliament, the Romanian government and legislative, as well as from the European producers themselves.

On behalf of the organizers, Mr. Sitaru, chair of APPR, spoke about the challenges farmers will face in the near future, pertaining from the European Green Deal and how this translates into the Common Agricultural Policy. He appealed to politicians to consult farmers before deciding the legislation, in order to be sure that the outcome is applicable and not counterproductive. Also present at the first panel, the Romanian minister of agriculture, Adrian Oros, talked about the national strategic plan and stated that there must be a dialogue between farmers, professional associations and the authorities.

Speakers from DG Agri and from the European Parliament gave an update on the Trilogue CAP negotiations and elaborated on proposed budgetary allocations in Pillar 1 and on eco-schemes. From the Romanian Parliament, the chairman of the Agriculture Commission spoke about legislative priorities for the upcoming months.

Christiane Lambert, President of the Copa, expressed it regrets for the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and, equally, her hopes that Romania will remain in the Copa Cogeca for a long time, mentioning that "if decisions are not taken with our consultation, they are taken against us".

The findings of the USDA impact study on the Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity strategies triggered a lot of questions addressed to the FAS regional attaché. This was one more time a compelling argument that the Commission should have prepared its impact analysis before advancing the two proposed strategies.

Celine Duroc of CEPM voiced the challenges of the European maize growers, faced with increasingly tough constraints that erode their competitiveness in the global marketplace. The compulsory crop rotation, proposed to replace the current crop diversification, is a particular matter of concern, because its implementation would diminish the total area to maize in EU, while the European bloc is already the top importer of maize in the world in recent years. Risk management, the targets of the Green Deal strategies and C-farming were other items of major interest on the agenda.

The congress culminated with the awarding of the "Oscar" of the Romanian agriculture, that is, the "Golden Maize" trophy for excellence in corn cultivation.



ANPROMIS CONFERENCE IN PORTUGAL



The 11th National Maize Symposium, which was also the 1st Cereal Crops Meeting, brought together a record number of 1,250 participants on 5 March via videoconference, including many students from various higher education institutions and agricultural technicians, in line with ANPROMIS's effort to get closer to the future generation of farmers and agricultural technicians.

This symposium was a strong sign that the Portuguese cereal sector is united and shares the same objectives and strategies. The theme of water was central, as water is an essential asset for the survival of maize and irrigated agriculture in Portugal. The invited experts revealed that years of extreme drought are becoming more and more frequent (6 out of the last 20 years) in Portugal and that more than 50% of the water flowing in Portuguese rivers depends on the inflow from Spanish rivers. Water consumption in the Portuguese agricultural sector has decreased, reflecting greater efficiency in the use of this scarce resource. On the other hand, urban consumption continues its growth trend.

Furthermore, the increase in demand for raw materials in the world, including cereals, calls for Portuguese and European producers to increase the sown acreage, in order to meet the needs of the Portuguese and European agro-industry. The valorisation of Portuguese cereal production and the establishment of new marketing structures, including the creation of an interprofessional cereal association, appears to be an extremely important challenge for the country, as a means of enhancing the value of national production over the years.



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**
- ROUMANIA - *Association Roumaine des Producteurs de Maïs (APPR)*
- SLOVAKIA - *Zväz pestovateľ'ov a spracovateľ'ov kukurice (ZPSK)*

Meetings of the CEPM and its member organisations 2nd quarter 2021

- ✓ **CEPM:**
 - **27 May 2021 afternoon (online):** General Assembly and Board Meeting
- ✓ **France:**
 - **15-16-17 June 2021:** Les Culturelles, TERRALAB in Bétheny (Reims)
- ✓ **Germany:**
 - **11 May 2021 (online):** Communication committee DMK
 - **18 May 2021 (online):** Conference maize & environment
 - **8 June 2021 (online):** working group on maize breeding
- ✓ **Roumania:**
 - **March – June 2021 :** webinars on carbon and sustainable solution for agriculture (in partnership with CommodiCarbon)

Civil Dialogue Groups 1st semester 2021 (Online)

- 12-02-2021:** Direct payments and greening
- 05-03-2021:** Arable Crops - COP & seeds
- 19-03-2021:** GDC CAP
- 19-04-2021:** Arable crops - Sugar
- 07-05-2021:** International aspects of agriculture
- 21-05-2021:** Arable crops - Dried fodder and Energy crops
- 11-06-2021:** Environment and climate change
- 02-07-2021:** Arable crops - Rice