



Brussels, 11 March 2008

Background Note¹
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL
Brussels, 17 March 2008

The Council will be chaired by Mr Iztok JARC, Slovenian Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food.

*The Council will meet from 11.00 on Monday 17 March and will hold an exchange of views on the “**Health Check**” of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with a view to adopt Council conclusions on the matter.*

*The Council is expected to adopt a regulation providing for a 2% increase in EU **milk** production for the next 2008-2009 campaign.*

The Presidency will hold press conferences at the end of the session [+/- 17.30].

Proceedings open to the public can be followed via video streaming:
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/videostreaming>

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¹ This Note was prepared under the sole responsibility of the Press Office.

AGRICULTURE

Health Check

The Council will hold an *exchange of views* and is expected to adopt the conclusions drawn up by the Presidency on the "**Health check**" of the CAP since its 2003 reform ([7150/08](#)).

The purpose of these conclusions is to convey a Council's clear political message on the key issues emerging from the Commission's communication. Member States discussed and commented on the Communication over several meetings, in particular within the Special Committee for Agriculture, as well as at ministers' level.

The draft conclusions insist in particular on the following issues:

- simplification of Single Payment Scheme & cross compliance;
- the future of Single Area Payment Scheme (SAPS);
- further decoupling/ alternatives to coupled aid; article 69;
- market support instruments, safety net;
- "soft landing" for the dairy sector;
- ongoing and new challenges / modulation / energy crops / set aside.

The Commission should come back with legislative proposals in May for their detailed discussion under Slovenian and French Presidencies.

The European Parliament's delivered its opinion at its session on 10-11 March.

The Committee of the Regions adopted its opinion at its session on 6-7 February and the Economic and Social Committee adopted an "exploratory opinion" on 25 October 2007 and is expected to adopt its main opinion at its session on 28-29 May.

Dairy quotas

The Council intends to *adopt* a regulation modifying the "single CMO" regulation² to increase by 2% the EU milk production for the next campaign starting on 1st April 2008 ([16476/07](#)).

The Presidency will seek the agreement of some delegations, which are still concerned by the timetable of the proposal in the context of the ongoing CAP health check process.

The proposal is accompanied by an assessment report on the milk market situation which justifies it.

The European Parliament's delivered its opinion at its session on 10-11 March.

² Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (single CMO Regulation) as regards the national quotas for milk

OTHER BUSINESS

a) WTO negotiations on the Doha programme for development – information from the Commission

Commissioner Fischer Boel will report to the Council on the state of play of the agricultural strand of the WTO negotiations.

b) Memorandum to encourage a responsible organisation of Agrifood sectors in the interests of farmers and consumers – presentation by the French delegation

The French delegation will present the above memorandum (5745/08).

The memorandum proposes to strengthen producer organisations and inter-branch organisations to better face increasing competition and market and to balance the relationship between producers and retailers.

A consistent legal framework and appropriate financing instruments should be established at Community level in order to facilitate the development of such producer organisations and to allow them to better adapt themselves to the market situation, to improve the sectors' structure and to prevent and manage agricultural crisis.

(c) Future development of the sheep sector - Request from the Irish delegation

The Irish delegation will express its concerns with regard to the future development of the sheep sector which on its opinion plays a fundamental role by preserving environmental and ecological areas from erosion and abandonment (7291/08).

(d) Situation on the pigmeat market - Request from the Polish delegation

The Polish delegation will express its concerns with regard to situation on the pigmeat market.
