



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate D. Sustainability and income support  
**D.3. Implementation support and IACS**

Brussels,  
D3/LK/AB/MB/dz-Ares save 11332290

**NOTE TO THE FILE**

**Subject: Minutes of bilateral meeting with the Danish Agriculture & Food Council, 06 December 2017**

**1) Participants:**

**Danish Agriculture & Food Council (DAFC):** [Art 4.1 (b) - privacy]

**DG AGRI:** [Art 4.1 (b) - privacy]

**2) Main issues discussed**

The meeting took place on the initiative of DAFC.

The agenda proposed by the DAFC featured the following main points:

- Current issues and climate-related greening challenges
- Possible simplification measures: Geospatial aid application (changes in extensive areas (e.g. near water) and respecting multiannual contracts), triviality limits, pro rata
- Communication on the future of food and farming
- Opportunities with digitalization

a) Current issues and climate-related greening challenges

- DAFC representatives explained the challenges faced by DK farmers to meet crop diversification requirements due to cold and damp weather conditions which hampered the sowing of winter crops. They also referred to a letter of the Danish farmers' organisations to Hogan describing the issue.
- AGRI D.2 replied that DG AGRI is aware of the challenges and is willing to engage with DK and other MS in a similar situation to find the optimal solution .
- The possibility of addressing the issue with spring crops has been discussed. DAFC recognised that it would be possible to meet the greening requirements

with spring crops but many farmers would need to make suboptimal crop choices likely to lead to financial losses.

b) Timing of the on-the-spot checks (OTSC) for catch crops

- DAFC representatives were worried about the fairness of OTSC under the modified delegated act. In particular the impact of timing on the amount/level of sanctions.
- AGRI D.3 explained that OTSC need to be conclusive. Therefore, the timing of controls should be chosen in a way to ensure the conclusiveness of the checks. Furthermore, cases where a first visit does not yield conclusive results could be followed-up by a second<sup>s</sup> visit. However, such a visit is not required by EU legislation for all files selected to be checked for greening (cf. Article 26(4) of Regulation (EU) No 809/2014).

c) GSAA-related problems

- DAFC representatives explained the challenges of using GSAA in organic payments and other multi-annual 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar measures such as wetland projects. According to DAFC small differences in changing area require burdensome and costly adjustments.

DAFC would like to see a higher triviality (tolerance) threshold. DAFC also mentioned that the increased control time for modified parcels results in delayed payment to the farmers.

Finally, DAFC wanted to know whether there are other MS having similar problems or this is a specifically DK case.

- AGRI D.3 explained the general rules of introducing the GSAA in both pillars by 2018 and its benefits such as improved cross-checks. Having a tolerance margin between the drawing (spatially declared parcel) and the alphanumeric data was also mentioned as a possibility.

Since the use of GSAA appears to be problematic only in Rural Development measures, DAFC was advised to raise the issue with RD colleagues.

d) Pro-rata on arable land

- DAFC raised the issue of applying pro-rata for areas under the arable land category which in reality looks like a permanent grassland land cover.

DAFC explained that farmers and administrations are not in favour of reclassification of such land to permanent grassland due to the restrictions it entails (PG ratio) and their negative impact on land values.

- AGRI D.3 replied that this issue was already raised by DK authorities and other DK stakeholders in different fora. Under the current legislation, pro-rata cannot be applied for arable land, only on areas of permanent grassland.

e) Communication on the future of food and farming

- DAFC highlighted that the Communication was received very positively by DK farmers. They see huge potential in the reform, since specific challenges such as those discussed above could be addressed. However, DAFC is worried about how a level playing field can be maintained between farmers in different MS.

DAFC also wanted to know how advanced is DG AGRI's/EC's thinking on issues such as income support linked to environmental practices, cross-compliance and budgetary matters.

- AGRI D.2 and D.3 jointly replied that the level playing field was already a concern under the last reform. Although there is a conflict between more flexibility to MS and having a common legal framework ensuring level playing field, it is the EC's task to strike the right balance.

It was clarified that it is too early to discuss concrete initiatives, budget distribution between schemes or external/internal convergence. It is possible that there will be EU objectives set at MS/regional level and/or a common set of requirements and standards in the cross-compliance spirit but MS authorities will have a crucial role in transposing those to farm level. The overall result is likely to be a more diverse set of rules and commitments than the existing ones but also one better suited to local conditions.

f) Feedback on monitoring approach

- AGRI D.3 asked DAFC for any feedback it may have about the monitoring approach.
- DAFC appeared very positive about the huge potential of such an approach but also expressed concern about the possible “big brother is watching” effect. The administrative burden for farmers (if required to document/photograph plenty of activities) was also flagged as a potential issue.

[Art 4.1 (b) - privacy]