



European news

Rural development : Implementation of national programmes

Since the end of December 2013, national and regional governments really took up the drafting of their national rural development programmes, a working document for the policies on this matter between now and 2020. At the same time, the operational programmes putting in place the priorities set in the national programmes are being elaborated by national or regional administrations together with the European Commission.

The member organisations were invited several times to use the time frame which ends in June 2014 to try including the contractors in the future beneficiaries of the measures supporting SMEs in rural areas (Article 19 of Regulation 1305/2013). Some organisations have shared their problems of being heard by their administration and the secretariat engaged in a discussion with DG AGRI to influence the national stakeholders through the voice of the Commission. The Commission's services are open for such feedback and even though we cannot guarantee the total effectiveness, it is an extra support for all of us. The secretariat asks all the organisations to invest time in these matters and repeats its offer for support vis-à-vis the Commission.

Dialogue between the Commission and the civil society

As already announced in the Bulletin issue from January, the DG AGRI's services of the European Commission want to raise transparency and balance in a better way the interests represented in the scope of its consultation with the sector's stakeholders. The call for applications was launched on 1 April for the composing of the civil dialogue groups in agriculture, replacing as from 1 July the current advisory groups. CEETAR has applied to join these groups and awaits the Commission's answer.

Ministers and MEPs give their green light for delegated acts

The Council of Ministers for agriculture and the European Parliament has given green light to 11 delegated acts (implementing measures) of the CAP reform. The Commission will adapt the one on direct payments during the third trimester and will also adopt other texts of this type, especially on wine, after the Parliament elections to be held at the end of May.

Social: agreement on the posting of workers

On 16 April, the European Parliament approved a series of measures aiming at improving the implementation of the 1996 directive on posted workers providing services in other EU countries during a limited period. These new provisions are a result of an informal agreement with the Council of Ministers (announced in the Newsflash issue of March). According to the new provisions, not only the subcontracting company but also the contracting company can be held responsible when the remuneration of the posted workers is not respected. In the construction sector, such a system, or an equivalent, will be obligatory. The Member

States will be able to introduce stricter provisions and include other sectors.

The text also provides a list of control measures which can be completed on national level. It gives the Member States a non exhaustive list of criteria permitting them to decide whether the posting is legitimate or if it is an attempt to circumvent the legislation, for instance by creating companies in countries where social contributions are much lower than anywhere else in the EU. The agreement still has to be formally approved by the Council. For further information, please contact the [secretariat](#).

Morocco protests against European Commission

An implementing measure of the CAP reform modifying the customs clearance procedure for fresh and transformed fruit and vegetables imported to the EU provokes high protests from Morocco. The country sees in this measure an unacceptable attack on its exports. According to the Moroccan government, the measure in question could in the long run reduce "by half" the Moroccan exports of fruit and vegetables to the European market. This

modification could have important consequences for the agricultural contractors working in Morocco. Indeed, Morocco is economically very closely tied to the EU and negotiates at the moment a complete and profound free trade agreement with Brussels. For this agreement, a fourth cycle of talks was recently ended. In 2013, the country's agricultural exports to the EU amounted to 1.2 billion euros, mostly tomatoes (22 %) and beans (13.2 %).

Working groups

Between the end of March and the beginning of April, the three start-up meetings of the working group for Agricultural Machinery, Image of the Sector and Forest were held. These first meetings, organised with Skype, permitted to lay the bases for the future dialogue between the members. A quick assessment of the national situations on different

themes and a review of the latest European developments drew the first lines for the future actions that need to be taken. In the following weeks, evolutions are to be expected of course. The secretariat invites everyone wanting to join these working groups to do so. For more information, please contact the [secrétariat](#).

CEETAR General Assembly 2014

We would like to remind you that the next general assembly of CEETAR will be held on 24 June 2014 in Belgium. Participants can arrive on 23 June in the afternoon. Dinner and accommodation are provided. The actual meeting will take place the next day. It also includes a visit to a Belgian contractor. We would like to emphasise that this

year's meeting isn't subjected to community funding. The travel and accommodation costs will therefore not be paid for. You will later receive an invitation with all the practical details and the agenda. For further information, please contact the [secretariat](#).

Member organisations' activities

The Netherlands

Tractor bumpers still tested in 2014

Throughout 2013, the Dutch contractors organisation CUMELA has carried out practical tests to evaluate the new, more safer tractor bumpers. In the whole of the Netherlands, some ten contractors have participated in these tests, each of them bought one of the available bumpers on the market. Small reminder, CUMELA did some campaigns to promote safer transport for the agricultural and building sector in 2012 and 2013. The test carried out in 2013 by the ten contractors have screened the advantages and the inconveniences of the bumpers, with special attention for the visibility of the tractor by the other road users as a result of the bumper. CUMELA then organised some meetings in order to present the practical results of these evaluations, leading to a list of recommendations for the six producers who participated in the tests. Some of these six producers presented entirely new concepts, while others proposed simpler versions. CUMELA Nederland will continue these tests in 2014 and 2015 and almost thirty contractors have shown their interest to participate in this second wave of tests since the general assembly of 8 March 2014. CUMELA decided to test four types of bumpers and these will be tested during three months by eight contractors. To be continued...



(Source photo: CUMELA)

General assembly CUMELA Nederland

During its general assembly, CUMELA Nederland took the opportunity to present its new direction team. Hannie Zweverink unanimously was chosen general director of the organisation, representing almost 2,000 members in the Netherlands, while Michiel Pouwels leaves his job as communications responsible and becomes director, Hannie's old job. The 300 contractors that were present at this general assembly also celebrated the retirement of Jan Maris, who was general director of CUMELA for nearly thirty years. Jan Maris will stay present within the profession by representing CUMELA in CEETAR.

The participants talked about numerous subjects at this general assembly, for instance the contractors' sector's image. "Do the policy makers and the politicians know our profession and the advantages you get from working with our members?", asks Michiel Pouwels. After five years of trying to raise awareness about the profession, Mr Pouwels still thinks individual contractors need help, especially for everything that has to do with communication and marketing (creation of a reputation and an image vis-à-vis the potential agricultural clients, but also vis-à-vis the local politicians). The communication between employers and employees has also been discussed during this assembly, the retirement age of the workers being raised from 65 to 67, with a communication campaign MooiVakMan (Beautiful Job/Craftmanship), aimed at the means to reach the retirement age in good health.

Another topic discussed by CUMELA Nederland is the digital communication which is not only good for the environment and saves money and time, it also allows member contractors to access useful information for their work. This is the case for their Grondig magazine (10 issues a year, 3,500 prints), which is linked to the website grondig.com and to the Grondig.com actueel newsletter.



Spain

Plan to replace outdated tractors

The Spanish government has approved a plan to replace outdated tractors on a national scale. This plan was named "PIMA TIERRA" and has a budget of 5 million euro intended for replacing the old tractors by new ones with better energy efficiency and less polluting emission. "In Spain, 55% of the tractors are being used for over 16 years and this plan will make it easier to replace these with new agricultural machinery", says Diego Sanromán, general coordinator of AMACO-ANESA. The sum of the subsidy of this plan can amount up to 9,000 euro and depends on the power of the tractor that has to be replaced and of the energy classification of the new tractor. "The funds of this plan still aren't enough to buy combine harvesters because their residual value is higher than the amount of the subsidy", adds Diego, who thinks it's a good project to modernize the tractors on a national level, while hoping the project will have a higher budget in 2015.



ASEMFO
20 ANIVERSARIO
1994-2014

JUNTA GENERAL
3 de abril de 2014

Instituto de Ingeniería de España 3 de abril de 2014

ASEMFO's general assembly

The yearly general assembly of ASEMFO took place on 3 April 2014 in Madrid. The meeting started with a presentation by Dña. Beatriz Torralba of the Centre for Technological and Industrial Development from the Ministry of Economy and Competition, presenting to the members PYME, an innovation support tool for SMEs. "2014 still is very difficult for our organisation as well as for the whole forestry services' sector because of the cutbacks by nearly 50% of the funds granted by public administrations", says Arancha López de Sancho, director of ASEMFO. She bets on the new programme of the European Fund for Rural Development and the Fund for Regional Development which could give more support to the forestry sector. The sector's hope for more financing linked to the Estrategia Horizonte 2020 programme and I+D+I Plan of the Spanish agri-food and forestry sector is not to be forgotten. Another important topic that was discussed during the general assembly is the strong competition that exists between Spanish public companies and the private companies. Indeed, according to the 7th study carried out by ASEMFO on the investment and employment in the forestry sector, the public companies account for 49% of the investments. In 2014, ASEMFO will participate in two important exhibitions for its sector: Expobiomasa, the internal exhibition on biomass in Valladolid in October, and National Environmental Congress (CONAMA) which will take place in Madrid in November.



(Source: ASEMFO)

Belgium

Mixed use tractors still hot topic

The Royal Decree on the periodic technical inspection of agricultural tractors for mixed use or non-agricultural use was signed on 19 March 2014. Johan Van Bosch, general secretary of Agro-Service, states that the new rules describe in which situations a periodic technical inspection for tractors is needed.

A tractor exempt from technical inspection:

- When agricultural works are carried out and the contractor has a limited quantity to use red diesel without excise duties, he can use the red diesel without having to pay the excise duties for all transport between farm and field.
- For other transport in the scope of agricultural works and the contractor having the contingent number to use red diesel without excise duties, he has to pay excise duties at 22 euro for every 1,000 litres.
- Carrying out non-agricultural works is prohibited.

A tractor subjected to technical inspection:

- When agricultural works are carried out and the contractor has a limited quantity to use red diesel without excise duties, he can use the red diesel without having to pay the excise duties for all transport between farm and field.
- For other transport in the scope of agricultural works, he has to pay excise duties at 427 euro for every 1,000 litres.
- For all other works, he has to pay excise duties at 22 euro for every 1,000 litres.

"Several institutions supervise the works carried out by agricultural contractors and very often are they wrongfully reported", says Johan Van Bosch in his editorial of the March 2014 issue of the Agro-Service magazine. He also adds that the major problem is the different interpretation of this issue by the Federal Public Service (FDS) Mobility and the FDS Finances, as well as the lack of accordance between the rules used by these two federal services. Johan Van Bosch wonders: "The main question now is where do agricultural works stop and where do non-agricultural begin?" For instance, the contractors who transports the grass he mowed to the farm or who transports grain to the merchant after the harvest, is this being considered as agricultural

or as non-agricultural transport? "Agro-Service regrets that the introduction of an agricultural registration plate has only led to more costs and burdens" says Johan Van Bosch. Agricultural and forestry tractors used for agricultural works have to carry a new registration plate from now on. He says he has never seen a similar situation since he started as secretary general for Agro-Service. "We don't know yet how to prove how many litres without excise duties, with excise duties at 22 euros and with excise duties at 427 euros a contractor uses. We fear the government will create some sort of log, in which all the transport, all the drivers and all the hours have to be mentioned... This isn't workable, so we think the contractors will choose for white diesel for mixed use" concludes the secretary general of Agro-Service.



An "agricultural company without limits and borders"

This is how Aernouts Tax names itself. The company started on 1 August 2013 and was born out of the partnership between two agricultural contractor companies: the Belgian company Swa Aernouts (specialised in classic agricultural works but with a strong reputation in the recycling of green waste and wood waste, built up in recent years) and the company Karl Tax, a Dutch colleague based just at the other side of the border. Swa Aernouts became independent in 1987 and Karl Tax has been active in

the profession since 1997. The two companies that complete each other perfectly, will keep their own personnel during the two first years and the fact of them working together will allow to raise their market power. "The fact that the sprl Aernouts Tax will be active in the Netherlands as well as in Belgium, offers an important advantage to its clients", says the Agro-Service magazine of March 2014, reporting this positive initiative.

France

Robots on the field

A day filled with demonstrations of new mobility solutions of intelligent vehicles in natural areas was organised for the first time on 17 April in Montoldre in the Allier department. This day was an initiative of the Irstea centre of Clermont-Ferrand and the Institut Pascal, who have been working for years on robotic solutions and driver assistance systems to make the work of field operators safer in agricultural and forest areas as well as on public work sites. "In 2011, almost 60,000 workers were victim of work accidents in agricultural areas, of which 24 died" states Irstea, who developed, together with its partners, devices to prevent accident risks linked to falling over or to slipping of the vehicles. Moreover, demonstrations of convoys of autonomous vehicles also were held, proving the feasibility of making several medium-size machines work together in order to offer alternatives to the idea of "always bigger/more powerful".

www.ecotechs.irstea.fr/demonstrations-du-17/



FNEDT signs agreement fighting against illegal employment

In the scope of the 'Salon International de l'Agriculture', FNEDT, together with other professional organisations, unions and the Ministries of Employment and Agriculture, signed a agreement that fights against illegal employment.

Besides the classic cases of illegal employment, the organisations was particularly active on the subject of false agricultural mutual support, false independent workers, especially auto-contractors. A specific part was dedicated to the fact of needing services coming from Europe or third countries which is the subject of a draft regulation aiming at reinforcing the inspection on the service demanders who need posted workers.

(Source : Newsletter EDT n° 396)

National session contractors' wives

The national session 'Contractors' wives' was held on 17 and 18 March 2014 in Paris, where women from ten French regions were present.

These days were organised in the scope of the class education program, the system aiming at providing support to the contractors who committed to represent EDT at regional and local levels.

The participants primarily sat together in three workshops in order to identify the positions of the contractors' wives within the agricultural and forestry companies:

Workshop 1: What is your role in the company?

Workshop 2: What gratitude do you get for your contribution to the company?

Workshop 3: How do you organise work and private life?

Afterwards, the participants were able to express their expectations vis-à-vis FNEDT in their conclusions.

(Source: Newsletter EDT n° 398)



(Source : www.fnedt.org/femmes-entrepreneures)

United Kingdom : Contractors respect bees

The National Association of Agricultural Contractors (NAAC) organised the Pollinator Conference at its offices on 28 April. "The aim of this conference is to encourage contractors to develop good agricultural practices that respect the pollinators", emphasises Jennifer Donn, Director of the NAAC. Respect for the ecosystems and the use of pesticides are the main subjects of this conference which interests a lot of rural stakeholders. According to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust do insects contribute for over 400 millions of pounds a year to the British economy and for 14,2 billion euros to the European economy thanks to the pollination of many cultures. Numbers worth considering.



Sweden : Find new contractor members

The general assembly of the Swedish organisation LSM took place in Ängelholm, in the south of Sweden, on 20 March 2014. This yearly meeting, in which Bent Juul Jørgensen, the Director of the Danish organisation DM&E, participated, extended for one year the mandate of the board and its president Claes Jönsson. One of the major problems the Swedish organisation currently faces and that was discussed during this meeting is the search for new members after losing 100 of its 206 members who didn't want to pay anymore.

Moreover, the obligation to add 9.5% of biodiesel to the fuel for agricultural machinery poses some technical problems, for the contractors as well as for farmers and the Swedish association wages a media battle to counter this recent legislation.

Germany : preparations for DeLuTa 2014

The next DeLuTa edition, the big event organised every two years by the German agricultural contractors will take place in Münster on 3 and 4 December. The April 2014 issue of LU aktuell, the monthly magazine from the German organisation BLU, informed about a first preparatory meeting mid-March in order to learn from the previous edition from 2012 and to prepare for the next. Because of its success, the organisation thinks about enlarging the capacity to welcome more participants without changing the appealing concept.



(Source: BLU)

New this year will be the active participation of Junge BLU, who regroups some hundred sons and daughters under 35 of agricultural contractors who are member of the German organisation BLU. Concerned with improving the image of the profession, Junge BLU will award its first prize for the "Watching LU" initiative during the DeLuTa. "Watching LU" is a contest for the best video made inside the agricultural contractor companies.

Denmark : Control the quality of interventions

The maintenance and replacement of channellings from individual houses is an activity one in three Danish contractors are faced with. A new quality control system for the works carried out by the contractors is under way in Denmark, especially for the replacement of old sewer pipes. In this process the contractor has to use his smartphone to localise the working site as well as to take pictures et verify the quality of the work carried out vis-à-vis the Danish authorities. The organisation DM&E who regroups the agricultural and forestry contractors recently held its first meeting with the European organisation ENFE and will participate in a fair on forestry equipment in Laneeso on 22 May 2014.

Ireland : Agri-Taxation Review

FCI, the Irish national association representing agricultural contractors, sent its comments to the Agri-Taxation Review consultation process at the end of March. The organisation seeks agri-taxation reliefs that incentivise agricultural contractors to play a bigger and more important part in delivering on the government's objectives of smart, green growth.

FCI made several requests. Amongst these, the organisation stressed:

- The establishment of national register of agricultural contractors, based on criteria agreed upon by the Revenue Commissioners and FCI. These criteria include an insurance bond, tax compliance and VAT registration.

- The fight against the Black Economy by allowing only receipts from agricultural contractors on the National Register as taxable receipts.
- The grant of aid support for contractors registered by the Revenue Commissioners under the new Rural Development Programme for new investments in technology. This would provide economies of scale and ensure Ireland to comply with GHG emission requirements.
- The open access to Accelerated Investment Allowances for agricultural contractors, in order to allow them to invest in high capital cost machinery.

Italy : strongest machinery sells best

According to sales statistics of agricultural machinery in Italy in 2013, the strongest tractors and combine harvesters keep their sales in line with 2012 (cf the tables below). For the tractors sales only rise for the models over 240 CV, while all the other strength ranges saw their sales fall in 2013. For combine harvesters, sales of machines with over 299 CV finish first and see a nice progression (+15.5%) compared to 2012. "It is thanks to the farmers turning to agricultural contractors that the sales in the segment of the strongest machinery keep up so well", says Massimo Alberghini, president of UNIMA. According to him, farmers stop

investing in machinery and turn more to contractors: a positive sign in an economic situation where it's difficult to earn money.

Italy is estimated to have some 18,000 agricultural contractors and, on this total, 6,500 carry out this profession primarily or exclusively. Practically all are active in agricultural works, 40 to 45% of them also carry out industrial activities (construction, selective working, excavation works). More than 700,000 Italian farmers call upon a contractor to provide a service and one in three delegate the complete activity to a contractor.

Sales of combine harvesters in Italy

MIETITREBBIATRICI	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% 2013/ 2012
0-245 CV	106	126	158	117	104	108	76	89	17,1%
245-299 CV	167	149	191	181	141	92	106	115	8,5%
oltre 299 CV	144	254	284	212	198	211	207	239	15,5%
Totale	417	529	633	510	443	411	389	443	13,9%

Fonte FederUnacoma

Sales of tractors in Italy

TRATTRICI	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
0-50 CV	5407	5525	5378	5521	4489	4025	3216	2932
50-100 CV	18794	16351	16238	15528	12544	12321	9844	9647
100-180 CV	4609	3877	4358	4776	5000	5612	4920	5092
180-240 CV	663	728	813	744	774	865	762	654
oltre 240 CV	297	351	481	491	527	615	606	692
Totale	29770	26832	27268	27060	23334	23438	19348	19017

Fonte FederUnacoma



Agenda

7 May: Saint Omer (France). General Assembly of EMSA (European Mobile Seed Association). This will be the fourth general assembly since the organisation's founding in 2010 and will bring together processors from several countries: Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Sweden and Poland.

12-14 May: Brussels. 5th AEBIOM European Bioenergy Conference 2014.
Info: European Biomass Association at www.aebiom.org/conference

15-16 May: Dunkirk (France). FNEDT General Assembly, with a discussion on trade union actions and another on the impact of the open borders policy on the activities of agricultural contractors. Last but not least, a closing debate on "what win-win partnership between agricultural production, providing of services and industry

19-20 May: Luxemburg. Council of the Ministers of Agriculture.

25 May : European legislative elections.

03-06 June : Brussels. Green week.

13 June: Brussels. European Commission's conference on working conditions.

24 June: Belgium. General Assembly of CEETTAR. Beside the statutory meeting, a visit to a Belgian contractor will be organised.



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