

**Question for written answer E-007807/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Minimum number of in-calf cows required for suckler cow premium

There is concern in Flanders about the abolition of the suckler cow premium for farms with less than 60 cows (less than 20 cows in calf). This is at odds with the policy of ensuring the sustainability of farms by means of diversification. It is precisely mixed farms, which combine agriculture and horticulture supplemented with livestock rearing, that are likely to suffer. More than 3 366 farms in Flanders could be affected, 1 703 of them operated by a farmer under 55. Such mixed farms are often typified by being built up with the family's own capital without a great burden of debt, or by the wish, through this 'mixed' form organic farming, to close the circle of dependence on external inputs.

Flanders has now submitted its plans for the implementation of the CAP measures to the Commission.

1. Can the Commission explain whether the proposal by Flanders is in accordance with the strategy of ensuring the sustainability of farming by diversification or with the organic agriculture strategy?
2. Are the Flemish plans in line with the Commission's vision of the importance of small-scale (family) farms, and how do they guarantee such farms' chances of survival?
3. When will the Commission's evaluation of the Flemish proposal be completed?