

Question for written answer E-003429/2018
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Innovation and competitiveness of European agriculture in the context of the new multi-annual EU financial framework 2021-2027

Compared to their counterparts in third countries, EU farmers face higher costs of complying with strict EU legislation and guidelines on ecology, quality of production, animal welfare and excessive red tape. This burden is particularly evident in the pig and poultry breeding sector, where compliance efforts account for between 5 and 10% of the costs. This is one of the reasons why the average costs of agricultural production in the EU is higher than those of third countries.

Moreover, when compared with other countries, the European level of investment in agriculture does not look the best. A large proportion of farmers have difficulty in accessing credits. Moreover, the level of expertise remains low - 70% of farmers have learned their profession through practice only. The industrial productivity growth is also declining. The precision agriculture sector, where investments in computerised crop and breeding management would bring significant savings and increase competitiveness, seems to be a particularly unused potential.

In view of this, can the Commission say how it is going to improve the low competitiveness of the European agricultural sector through, among other things, the EU budget for 2021-27, and how it is going to address the problem of higher production costs in comparison with third countries, arising, among other things, from insufficient funds put into supporting investments and innovation made by farmers?