

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3436/00

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to the Commission

Subject: Beet growing

Beet growers in the south of Italy have benefited from national subsidies within the meaning of the Community regulation which expires at the end of the current 2000-2001 year. Those sugar refineries which have remained operational (Celano, Foggia, Incoronata, Termoli and Villosar) employ 1600 permanent and seasonal workers, in addition to which there are around 2000 workers in induced employment.

Clearly, productivity is inadequate (60 q of sugar per hectare) and will need to be improved through structural changes, in particular:

- (a) development of water resources and of irrigation techniques;
- (b) improvement projects in the agro-economic sector;
- (c) coordination and wider use of modern technology.

Could the Commission defer the proposal to amend the regulation on the common organisation of the market in sugar seeking to abolish national aid to beet growing in southern regions?

This aid should be maintained for a further five years (until the end of the 2005/2006 year), so that there is sufficient time to prepare a specific project for the sector with the aim of improving structural aspects of holdings and increasing productivity of crops.