

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1696/07
by Niels Busk (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Quality assurance schemes

The plenary discussions at the Conference 'Food Quality Certification – Adding Value to Farm Produce' of 5-6 February 2007, in which Commissioner Fischer Boel participated, demonstrated the lack of consensus on a clear definition and criteria for farm assurance schemes (with the exception of organic production).

Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005¹ on support for rural development states (Article 32 (b)) that support shall 'be for Community food quality schemes, or for those recognised by the Member States which comply with precise criteria to be defined in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 90 (2)'. However, in Regulation 1974/2006² laying down implementing rules, the quality criteria are very vague and can in no way be considered as 'precise criteria': Article 22 (2) (a) says that the farming methods must 'guarantee a quality of the final product that goes significantly beyond the commercial commodity standards as regards public, animal or plant health, animal welfare or environmental protection.'

In the absence of such criteria, could the Commissioner clarify how DG Agriculture evaluates the eligibility of such schemes under the new rural development funding?

Could the Commission list which schemes to date have received funding under the Rural Development rules?

¹ OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1.

² OJ L 368, 23.12.2006, p. 15.