



**2015/2227(INI)**

22.12.2015

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on enhancing innovation and economic development in future European farm  
management  
(2015/2227(INI))

Rapporteur: Damiano Zoffoli

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Highlights that the global population is growing and is estimated to reach 9.6 billion by 2050, putting increasing pressure on the supply of food and natural resources; notes that this can also have repercussions for European farmers;
2. Points out that the world's utilised agricultural area now stands at less than 2000 m<sup>2</sup> per person and that that area needs to produce enough food of sufficient quality to keep everyone in the world fed throughout the year;
3. Recognises that the major challenge will be to ensure access to food, and to an adequate supply of good quality and safe food for all EU citizens, while at the same time lowering pressure on natural resources, thereby preserving the environment and valuable resources for future generations; emphasises, in this regard, the potential and importance of innovation in farm management; stresses the importance of the Milan Charter and the need for a conducive EU policy framework in order to meet this challenge; further emphasises that sustainable farm management can be a strong foundation for economic viability;
4. Stresses the need to tackle food waste, and in particular systemic food waste, since each year 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted or lost; considers that, to reduce the present waste, greater cooperation is needed between farmers, producers, and distributors; urges Member States to find innovative ways to tackle food waste, such as the distribution of unsold food to charitable organisations if it is still fit for consumption or, if not, its reuse in the nutrient cycle through composting; points to the need to promote food education programmes within the family and at school so as to encourage a proper diet from childhood;
5. Underlines that for every tonne of food waste avoided, approximately 4.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> could be saved, which would have a significant impact on the environment; stresses, in addition, the importance of a legal framework consistent with the circular economy principle, whereby clear rules are laid down on by-products, the use of raw materials is optimised, and residual waste is reduced as much as possible;
6. Stresses, therefore, the importance of innovation in supporting farmers in the transition to more sustainable agricultural practices, with the aim of securing the right to quality and safe food and increasing the efficiency and sustainability of production and distribution systems while ensuring a decent income for all farmers, the protection of public health and animal health and welfare, and a reduction in pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, thus mitigating the effects of climate change;
7. Insists that good farm management practices should halt biodiversity loss in line with the EU's Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and ensure the protection of air, water and soil quality so as to guarantee the productivity and sustainability of the agricultural sector in the future; considers that the same objective should also be achieved by GMO-free crop

production and cloning-free livestock production;

8. Notes that successful farms depend on water and soil quality and biodiversity and that the good stewardship of natural resources lies in the hands of the farmers; highlights the benefits that the right incentives and the sharing of best practices in the field of sustainable farm management can bring in this regard; underlines the key role played by organic and biodynamic farming in preserving natural resources, preventing environmental pollution and directly and indirectly preserving biodiversity;
9. Recalls that with appropriate economic incentives, fairer income distribution in the food supply chain and transparent market conditions including country of origin labelling, farmers would be given the opportunity to tackle climate change more effectively and to ensure the resilience of ecosystems through the use of environmentally-friendly farming methods and ecological practices, including measures such as crop diversification, the conservation of natural habitats, ecosystems and local varieties and species, and organic farming, thereby further contributing to the conservation and promotion of biodiversity;
10. Stresses the importance of consumer awareness and information; highlights that more transparency in the supply chains and in production can help consumers to make better informed choices about the products they are buying; considers that this, in turn, can help farmers to earn higher revenues from their production;
11. Recalls that a simplification of measures and more guidance on the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) measures, would encourage farmers to adopt more sustainable farming practices;
12. Recognises the important role of family farms in rural life, in producing food and in preserving the culture and tradition of Member States and their regions; calls therefore for the spread of innovative concepts in agriculture based on sustainable production of high-quality food;
13. Is concerned that the mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 stressed that there has been no significant overall progress in the contribution of agriculture to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, and, as result, calls on the Commission and Member States to take this into account during the mid-term review of the CAP and for Member States to promote innovative policies;
14. Underlines the need to integrate production and processing by promoting producers groups and encouraging short supply chains which might help to reduce the carbon footprint of the food supply chain while providing local, fresher and healthier products for consumers;
15. Stresses that bringing farmers and consumers closer together through local food networks, often characterised by personal, direct contact between the producer and the customer, offers values such as fresh and locally produced food with less impact on the environment, and represents an opportunity to increase farmers' incomes; notes the positive role played by short supply which covers a range of direct selling (selling on the farm, at farmers' markets, or via the internet);
16. Believes that research and innovation in agro-ecology are key factors in supporting the

sustainable growth and competitiveness of the agri-food sector that could in turn improve social and economic conditions for farmers and local communities with the creation of more and better jobs, which would also help to attract young people to the farming sector; recognises, in this regard, the important role played by agricultural colleges and universities in supporting the development of skills for a new generation of farmers;

17. Further stresses that encouraging young farmers would help to redress the problems of land abandonment and an ageing rural population, thereby also limiting the risk of hydrogeological instability; emphasises that curbing the tendency towards land abandonment would also limit the phenomenon of land-grabbing;
18. Considers that the enhancement of innovation and economic development in farm management must be achievable for large, medium and small-scale farmers; believes that better links between the agricultural sector and research and innovation should be facilitated in order to share and implement methods of best practice on the ground;
19. Urges the Commission and Member States to invest more in research and innovation and to support the development of technologies that contribute to sustainable and economically viable farm management, whilst at the same time preserving the traditional knowledge and agricultural practices of farmers and animal breeders;
20. Considers that these investments should aim to strengthen the links between research, industry and farms, especially small and medium-sized ones, by facilitating the exchange of best practice and the transfer of research results to such farms which, despite being more numerous across the EU, are often excluded from innovation circuits; stresses that these programmes should aim to develop new technologies, including precision farming, and innovative sustainable cultivation techniques that can reduce the use of chemicals that are harmful to human and animal health and to the environment;
21. Highlights the significance of improving rural broadband networks as a contributory factor to enhancing innovation and economic development in farm management, particularly for medium to small-scale farmers;
22. Underlines the importance of applying sustainable farming and water management practices to adapt to and mitigate climate change;
23. Calls on the European Union to develop and explore integrated strategies to reduce the use of antibiotics to protect human and animal health and animal welfare;
24. Emphasises that by raising livestock on pasture, farmers enable their animals to move freely, engage in instinctive behaviours, consume a natural diet, and avoid the stress and illnesses associated with confinement;
25. Urges the European Union to invest more public funds in the strategic sector of organic farming in order to develop farming techniques to increase soil microbial activity and biodiversity, including the use of composting techniques and of companion planting and cover crops, and to encourage the collective purchase and use of machinery and the development of machines adapted to the needs of organic farming, the selection of locally appropriate robust varieties, the identification of new sources or organic fertilisers and natural solutions for the protection of plants against insects;

26. Calls on the Commission and Member States to invest in the improvement of varieties of endemic plant species which could be suitable for animal feeding in order to reduce the dependence on imports of animal feed that is often produced from genetically engineered plants.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	22.12.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+:                59 -:                7 0:                0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Marco Affronte, Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Catherine Bearder, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Lynn Boylan, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Alberto Cirio, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Stefan Eck, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, José Inácio Faria, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Jens Gieseke, Sylvie Goddyn, Matthias Groote, Françoise Grossetête, Jean-François Jalkh, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Susanne Melior, Massimo Paolucci, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Michèle Rivasi, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Renate Sommer, Dubravka Šuica, Tibor Szanyi, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Damiano Zoffoli
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Nikos Androulakis, Nicola Caputo, Mark Demesmaeker, Herbert Dorfmann, Luke Ming Flanagan, Elena Gentile, Martin Häusling, Jan Huitema, Merja Kyllönen, Mairead McGuinness, Ulrike Müller, James Nicholson, Alojz Peterle, Christel Schaldemose, Jasenko Selimovic, Keith Taylor
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Lucy Anderson, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Michał Boni, Neena Gill, Monika Hohlmeier, Sander Loones, Helga Stevens