

Brussels, 18 November 2020

CT/JP – 20 E 4

Subject: ERPA's call for better recognition and support in the new CAP

Dear Commissioner,

The European Rural Poultry Association (ERPA) had the pleasure and the honour to have a fruitful discussion with you a few weeks ago about the specificities of rural poultry and its challenges.

ERPA represents professional producers of rural poultry in Europe and aims to preserve and promote extensive family-based methods of farming, open-air breeding and colored birds from rustic slow-growing strains.

While Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) negotiations have moved to trilogue phase, we would like to draw your attention to the crucial need to ensure that rural poultry is not forgotten in the future regulation, as it is the case in the current CAP in which:

- poultry is not included in coupled payments,
- basic payments are linked to hectares of lands and not to individual farms or outdoor areas surfaces,
- complementary bonus (the so-called “redistributive payment”) for small farms is linked to hectares.

ERPA does hope that particular emphasis will be placed on the concept of sustainability, such as alternative productions, in the recommendations that will be sent to Member States concerning their CAP strategic plans.

Rural poultry producers that we represent – and particularly farmers – need higher recognition and financial support in the future CAP. We think that this is particularly relevant since **we meet the multiple European citizens' expectations and the major objectives of both the CAP and the “Farm to Fork” Strategy** regarding:

- ✓ **Sustainable development, including environmental care:**
 - low inputs productions, efficient management of natural resources,
 - low gas emissions and impact on the environment comparing to other meat productions,
 - small-scale farming,
 - free range areas with numerous native flora and fauna varieties, preservation of landscapes and biodiversity,
 - robustness of rural poultry breeds, resulting in limited use of antibiotics,
 - local origin of the feed, consistent with the transition to a circular economy,
 - organic poultry production included in rural poultry.

- ✓ **High level of animal welfare:** it is in the DNA of rural poultry to promote the best breeding practices such as extensive free-range farming allowing animals to express their natural behaviour, use of rustic slow-growing breeds, vegetation to protect birds against predators and severe weather, low animal densities, limited sizes of farms and buildings...
- ✓ **Economic sustainability and territorial anchoring in rural areas:** rural poultry production is made by a large number of primary producers and stakeholders, which maintain a viable base of human scaled farms and slaughterhouses and multiple jobs, participating in the maintenance of a territorial dynamism all across Europe.
- ✓ **Generational renewal:** starting a small-scale poultry production requires less substantial investments than in conventional large-scale productions, which is attractive to young farmers. Family farms are often synonym of better capacity for resilience and fair income for farmers.
- ✓ **Quality products:** organic, PGI, Label Rouge, traditional, slow growth, short/local markets... guarantee traceability for consumers and added value for producers; they also allow the European products to counteract imports of low-quality products.

We understand that Member States will be able to use up to 3% of the direct aids for sectorial interventions. This is an opportunity to finance numerous interventions in the fields of animal health and welfare, training, support and exchange of good practices, organic production, promotion, communication and marketing. Still, these procedures must be integrated in the national strategic plan in order to be activated for our productions!

Precisely, we ask for direct aids to support farmers who go beyond the regulatory requirements in terms of environment or animal welfare, *i.e.*:

- ✓ for small family farms,
- ✓ for free range surfaces in poultry production,
- ✓ for the development and management of outdoor areas and agroecology (*i.e.* agroforestry),
- ✓ for highest claims regarding animal welfare, especially for free range productions,
- ✓ for investments and targeted training to support the development of rural productions,
- ✓ for ensuring the control of official quality signs, guaranteeing reliability towards consumers, but source of significant additional costs for small producers...

Besides, we support the development of organic poultry farming, hence we invite the European Commission to strengthen the budgets aimed to stimulate the supply and demand for European organic poultry products.

We followed the suggestion of the European Commission to meet the representatives of the national authorities to make them aware of the mode of production of rural poultry. Nevertheless, in front of the large number of big generalist unions in Europe, it was difficult to make our voice heard.

We hope that the above-listed characteristics will be fully taken into account in the post 2020 CAP and **we call on the European Commission to use its role of facilitator in the**

trilogues to find an agreement meeting the ambitious agricultural objectives set by the “Farm to Fork Strategy.”

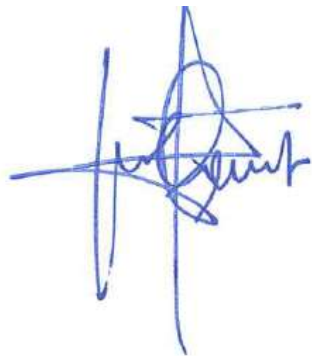
Furthermore, ERPA urges the European Commission to support rural poultry in the recommendations that will be provided on the strategic plans of the Member States.

As rural poultry only represents 5% of the total European poultry production, our full inclusion in the post-2020 CAP is of paramount importance. This will allow to contribute to the development of a more sustainable and resilient agriculture, as promoted by the “Farm to Fork” Strategy.

We do hope that we can count on your support and we remain at your disposal for any further information.

Yours faithfully,

Carlos Terraz
President - ERPA



Created in 2007, ERPA aims notably at preserving and developing the production of rural poultry in Europe (colored birds from rustic slow-growing strains) and at promoting its specificities. Further information is available on: <https://erpa-ruralpoultry.wixsite.com/erpa-en>