

## **E.U. Policy applied to the Walloon region**

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The Walloon region, the Southern part of Belgium, is rather known for its former steel and coal industry. However, its agriculture is modern and well-developed. Today, agriculture represents only 2 % of the labour force and 1.7 % of the regional gross value-added. The mean farm size is 43 ha, the total value of the mean professional farm is higher than 800 000 € and its indebtedness reaches 125 000 €

Agriculture is heavily depending on the CAP. Bovine meat represents 27 % of the total value of agricultural and horticultural production in 2004. The shares of milk, sugar beet and cereals represent 25, 12 and 8 %, respectively. In opposition to the Northern part of Belgium, horticulture and pork represent only 10 and 6 %, respectively.

For the year 2004, direct payments reached more than 233 million € : 36.2 % for suckling cows, 33.2 % for cereals (including corn), 10.8 % for young bulls, 8.4 % for milk, 5.9 % for slaughtering and 3.1 % for set-aside. Oilseeds and proteaginous crops represent only 0.5 and 0.3 %, respectively.

Concerning the 2003 CAP reform, the Walloon Government decided as follows :

- 1° the new rules are implemented as soon as January, 1<sup>st</sup> 2005;
- 2° the new system is implemented on an individual basis, referring to the 2000-2002 historical period;
- 3° in the bovine meat sector, the payments for suckling cows remain totally coupled; the others payments are totally decoupled;
- 4° in the fields of sheep meat, arable crops and seeds (except for lin and spelt), the payments are totally decoupled;
- 5° the direct payments in the dairy sector are included in 2006, as for tobacco and hops and sugarbeet.

Concerning cross-compliance, there are some specific measures about the definition of the good agricultural and environmental practices.

The control of cross-compliance is made by three administrative bodies : the directorate general for agriculture and the directorate general for environment on the regional level, and the food safety agency on the federal level.

Concerning the Rural Development Plan, the public support reached 45 million € in 2004, more than one half being for investment and young farmers settlement support. The cost of measure 4 reached 11.5 million €, mainly for organic farming (2,7 % of agricultural land), fruit production with inputs reduction and agri-environmental measures. The last ones were not very successful, as they are used, proportionally, three times less than in France and Germany. The present agri-environmental measures were defined in 2004 and seem to be more successful.

The programme for the good nitrogen management began in 2003 and concerns the definition of vulnerable zones, soil linkage of animal production, organic manure periods of spreading and the implementation of norms.

The NATURA 2000 network will cover 13 % of the Wallonian territory, among which a small part of agricultural land. However, the implementation is still in discussion

## GOOD AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

- **Anti-erosion**
- Plot with high risk when 50 % of the plot (min.50 a) have a slope higher than 10 %
- → arable crops are forbidden
- **Maintenance of soil organic content**
- It is forbidden to burn straw and crop residues
- **Maintenance of soil structures**
- Farmers must have made an analysis of their irrigated soils during the last 2 years. If problems were observed (pH, salinity) they should have found solution
- **Minimal soil capacity maintenance**
- All plots, even without any production, must keep their agronomic potential, and be free of undesirable weeds and perennial wild plants (bushes, trees).

## THE AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES IN WALLONIA

1. Ecological network and landscape conservation
2. Natural grassland
3. Intensive grass borders
4. Winter soil cover
5. Inputs reduction in cereals
6. Protection of endangered animal races
7. Livestock low density
8. High biological value meadows
9. Managed plot borders
10. Agri-environmental action plan