

4. European Health Forum Gastein **(EHFG) 2001** **vom 26. Bis 29. September 2001**



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The European Health Forum Gastein: A starting point for building a healthy CAP

Plenary Session III, Feedback from Forum IV “Building a healthy Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)” by Rapporteur Dr Mike Rayner, British Heart Foundation.

The European Health Forum Gastein gave representatives from Austrian and European farmers’ organisations, consumer organisations, environmentalists, public health advocates and international retailer and supply representatives the extraordinary opportunity to debate the objectives of building a new and healthy CAP at one table.

BSE as an opportunity

Highlighting the topical issues covered by the forum, Dr Mike Rayner pointed to the new opportunities for reforming the CAP that (1) surfaced after the experience of the food crises, particularly to mention here BSE crisis, and (2) are given in the context of EU enlargement. A basic step into the direction of reforming the CAP constitutes the clarification of the necessary health objectives in this respect. The public health sector has to raise the public awareness of the relationship between food and chronic diseases, for food safety represents just the minor disease causing burden. Combating chronic heart diseases, cancer, etc., which are major contributors for increasing morbidity rates in Europe, demands clear dietary actions of the EU, e.g. the adoption of an Action Plan for Nutrition Policy.

Looking at the health component of the CAP, one cannot leave the tobacco regime question aside, for the export-oriented production of tobacco in the EU has a non-negligible impact on the health in countries importing this tobacco.

Furthermore, the debate in the forum highlighted the possibilities of integrating environmental and health objectives with the purpose to re-built or modify the CAP on the simple basis: “What is good for the planet, is good for our health”.

Regarding policy options, the redirection of subsidies was made one of the major subjects of the discussion, recommending more money-flows into the pillar of rural development.

Where to tackle the problems?

The discussion revealed also several controversial positions among the present stakeholders concerning the issues:

- consumer confidence and / or public health,
- the question if what is good for individuals is also good for populations (population vs. individual high risk approach),
- supply and / or demand (e.g. Should the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption be tackled at the marketing and / or the production level?),
- the need for further clarification of the price issue concerning cost internalisation, a fair price for consumers and a fair return to farmers.

First steps to a new CAP

On this basis, several recommendations could be agreed on:

- 1) Everyone should affirm that a multifunctional agriculture should incorporate health objectives.
- 2) The Commission should publish its Action Plan on Nutrition Policy by spring 2002.
- 3) There should be an Inter-service Working Group on CAP and health to ensure that the debate that fortunately started at the European Health Forum Gastein is carried on.
- 4) CAP should promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables.