

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002505/24
to the Commission**

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(12 November 2024)

Subject: Causes of rising food prices

The latest report by the European Court of Auditors, No 20/2024, shows that we now have the greenest Common Agricultural Policy ever, as reflected in the national strategic plans.

However, the current CAP does not match the EU's environmental ambitions, nor farmers' aspirations.

Many of the environmental measures imposed on farmers cannot be implemented in practice and, moreover, all the Member States have availed of derogations from the CAP's Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs), while the Commission has amended and simplified the GAECs this year, meaning that the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy are far from being achievable.

Besides this, many farms in countries outside the EU are thriving because they sell products in the EU that do not meet European food safety standards and are not subject to mirror clauses.

1. How much have staple food prices risen in the EU as a direct result of the implementation of the increased conditionalities imposed on farmers through the CAP for 2023-2027?
2. How much have farmers lost owing to products from third countries produced using methods that do not meet EU production and quality standards?
3. What steps is the Commission envisaging taking to improve the situation of farmers?

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Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(19 February 2025)

1. Food prices have increased as a result of changing market conditions derived from the Russian war on Ukraine and resulting surge in input prices in 2022-2023, especially for energy and fertilisers. Prices were influenced by external factors, including the geopolitical situation and the impact of severe weather events on production capacity.
2. EU rules require all imported agri-food products to comply with EU health and food safety standards. The Commission maintains its commitment to act multilaterally, bilaterally and autonomously to strengthen the alignment of imports with EU production standards, and ensure that applying standards to EU producers does not lead to social and environmental leakages.
3. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) remains essential for supporting farmers' income, rewarding ecosystem services, compensating for work on land with natural constraints, and investing to improve competitiveness and resilience. Several concrete steps were taken to improve farmers' position, including an ambitious simplification proposal ⁽¹⁾ in 2024 to alleviate some of the burden. In the second week of taking office, this Commission immediately put forward two new proposals to strengthen farmers' position in the agri-food supply chain, and to enhance cross-border enforcement against unfair trading practices ⁽²⁾. The forthcoming Vision for Agriculture and Food will address the sector's long-term attractiveness, competitiveness, resilience and sustainability.

⁽¹⁾ Simplification Regulation (EU) 2024/1468, see also Commission Staff Working Document 'Simplification measures for farmers', SWD(2024) 360 final.
⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_6321