



AREFLH ANNUAL FORUM

3rd edition

Updated 11/09/2026

10 NOVEMBER
2026

IN BRUSSELS & ONLINE

PROGRAMME

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Date: 10th November 2026

Venue: Online and in Brussels at the delegation of the Emilia-Romagna region, Rue Montoyer 21

Languages: French, English, Italian, Spanish

08:30 Registration and coffee

09:00 **Start of the conference** - welcome speech by **Ramón Fernández-Pacheco**, AREFLH president and agriculture minister of Andalusia region

09:15 **Session 1: The future of fruits and vegetables CMO – perspectives from the regions and the sector**

Context

The Fruit and Vegetable CMO has historically constituted one of the most distinctive instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy. Through Producer Organisations (POs), Associations of Producer Organisations (APOs) and their operational programmes, it has encouraged farmers to organise collectively, concentrate supply, strengthen their position in the value chain and invest in competitiveness, environmental sustainability, innovation and crisis prevention.

The future of this model is now being discussed in the context of the broader reform of the CAP and the EU budget after 2027. The proposed changes to the architecture of EU agricultural policy raise important questions concerning the financing and governance of sectoral interventions, the transition between the current and future programming periods, the role of Member States and regions, and the capacity to preserve the specific characteristics that have made the Fruit and Vegetable CMO successful.

By the time of the Annual Forum, negotiations on several elements of the reform are expected to be considerably advanced. The Forum therefore provides an opportunity to move beyond the presentation of legislative proposals and discuss their **practical consequences for regions and Producer Organisations**.

Objective of the session

The session will bring together representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, regional authorities and the fruit and vegetable sector to assess whether the emerging framework can preserve and strengthen the achievements of the current CMO. Particular attention will be given to the need to maintain a **strong European dimension** for fruit and vegetable policy while providing sufficient flexibility to respond to different territorial and sectoral realities.

The discussion should also address the future role of regions. Regional authorities currently play an important role in the implementation of agricultural policy and in supporting investment, innovation and cooperation within the fruit and vegetable sector. Changes to the governance and financing of the CAP could therefore have significant consequences for their capacity to design and implement policies adapted to their territories.

10:20 **Questions & answers**



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10:40

Coffee break

11:00

Session 2: Innovation and Food Safety in the new Omnibus food and feed package

Context

European fruit and vegetable producers are facing increasingly complex production conditions. Climate change is altering pest and disease pressure, while the number of available plant protection solutions is shrinking and producers are required to meet increasingly demanding environmental and food-safety standards.

In this context, access to innovation is becoming a central component of the competitiveness and resilience of European agriculture.

At the same time, the European Union is reviewing parts of its food and feed safety legislation through the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus. The initiative aims to simplify and improve several regulatory procedures while maintaining the EU's high level of protection for human and animal health and the environment.

For the fruit and vegetable sector, this debate is particularly relevant in relation to plant protection products and the availability of innovative alternatives. Producers need solutions that allow them to respond rapidly to emerging pests, climate-related pressures and the gradual loss of existing active substances.

Objective of the session

The second session will examine whether the new regulatory framework can achieve an appropriate balance between safety, simplification and innovation.

The discussion will first provide participants with a clearer understanding of the main changes introduced by the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus and their practical implications for agriculture.

It will then focus specifically on the fruit and vegetable sector, where the availability of effective crop-protection solutions is particularly important because of the diversity of crops, the prevalence of minor uses and the rapid evolution of pest and disease pressures.

The session should therefore not approach simplification as an objective in itself. Rather, it should examine whether regulatory simplification can help accelerate access to safe and effective innovative solutions, without lowering the high standards of protection expected by European consumers.

12:00

Questions & answers

12:20

Concluding remarks by:

- Lisa Martini, AREFLH Vice-President and Director of Finaf.
- Ramón Fernández-Pacheco

12:30

End of the conference

12:35

Lunch cocktail



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ABOUT AREFLH

The main missions of the Assembly of European Horticultural Regions are to:

- Represent the voice of its members: regions, associations of producer organisations (APOs), producer organisations (Pos) and experts from 15 EU countries;
- Defend the economic and social interests of the fruit & vegetable sector in Europe;
- Promote exchanges of best practice, partnerships and joint projects between regions and professional organisations;
- Make proposals on the main issues affecting the future of the production in Europe.

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