

ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN HORTICULTURAL REGIONS

Activity report

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2019





ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN HORTICULTURAL REGIONS

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MORAL REPORT by the
President,
SIMONA CASELLI

Moral report by Simona Caselli



First of all, I wanted to thank the members of the General Assembly for their renewed confidence. Indeed, 2019 marks for me the start of a new mandate as President of AREFLH, as well as for Vice-President Jean-Louis Moulon. The board of directors was also renewed, and continues the work initiated in the AREFLH 2025 strategic project.

This year again, we were very active and forceful of proposals on the main issues and we obtained important results. The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy continued with the approval of reports on strategic plans and on the CMO by the European Parliament. From the end of 2018, AREFLH had proposed amendments to these texts. We can be satisfied because the majority of the amendments we proposed were supported by a significant number of parliamentarians.

We remain very attentive to these files, and we had the opportunity to put forward our positions during the conference co-organized with AREPO and AGRIREGIONS in October. We were once again able to underline the importance of the European fruit and vegetable sector, its economic organization, and the territorial anchoring of our productions. The debates with parliamentarians and representatives of the European Commission were again very constructive.

The sector is also regularly affected by crises, particularly phytosanitary crises, as we have seen once again with the major damage caused by the diabolical bug in several European regions. In this regard, AREFLH has alerted the European Commission and proposed recommendations to deal with phytosanitary emergencies, both to improve the mechanism for preventing and managing crises, and to encourage research projects devoted to parasitic infestations.

While the European Commission's Horizon Europe research framework program is being drafted, the task force for research and innovation in the European fruit and vegetable sector has produced a vision document presented to the European Commission's Research DG . He pleads for the fruit and vegetable sector to be highlighted and adequately financed in order to be able to respond to the looming challenges facing our production and consumption patterns.

On all these topics, significant work is undertaken by our experts from both colleges, which is what makes our network so strong.

Finally, I wanted to thank and welcome the new members who joined AREFLH in 2019: the Lazio region, as well as professional organizations: Dutch Produce Center (Netherlands), Unicoque (France), Coopenela (Portugal), CMP (Ireland). These new memberships bring our member countries to 9, our representativeness is only strengthened.

A photograph of a tomato plant with several tomatoes in various stages of ripeness. In the foreground, a large, bright red tomato is prominent, with a green one just below it. In the background, there are several more green tomatoes and a few small red ones. The background is blurred, showing more of the plant and some wooden stakes. A semi-transparent yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing the text "ABOUT AREFLH" in a brown, sans-serif font.

ABOUT
AREFLH

About AREFLH

Objectives and missions

The Assembly of European Horticultura Regions is an association created in 2000 on the initiative of a group of Spanish, French and Italian regions.

It represents the voice of the fruit, vegetable and horticultural regions and their producer organisations in Europe.

The specificity and strength of AREFLH lies in its original structure, as it is composed of two Colleges: the College of Regions and the College of Producers. The complementarity of these two colleges allows a collective work and the definition of common positions between regions and representatives of producers..

Our missions :

- Representing and defend the economic and social interests of regions and producers of the fruit and vegetable and flower sectors in European and international institutions.
- Promoting the exchange of experiences, partnerships and joint projects between associate members.

Being a force of proposals on the main policies that impact the fruit and vegetables and horticulture sector

Governance and administrative team



PRESIDENT
Simona Caselli



Secretary General :
Pauline Panegos
s.general@areflh.org



VICE-PRESIDENT
Jean-Louis Moulon
Chairman of IDfel Val de Loire



Europe Officer, AREFLH representative in Brussels:
Andrea Tivoli
europe@areflh.org

COLLEGE OF REGIONS
Chaired by Simona Caselli

PRODUCERS' COLLEGE
Chaired by Jean-Louis Moulon



Communication and administration officer:
Laetitia Forget,
communication@areflh.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Chaired by Simona Caselli

BUREAU
President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary

Our members in 2019

College of Regions

New members in green.

Belgium

Flanders

Spain

Andalusia

Catalonia

Valencia

France

New Aquitaine

Normandy

Brittany

Centre -Val de Loire

Occitanie-Pyrénées-Méditerranée

Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur

Pays de la Loire

Auvergne Rhône-Alpes

Hauts de France (observer)

Italy

Basilicata

Emilia-Romagna

Piedmont

Autonomous Province of Trento

Lazio

College of producers

New members in green.

Austria

AMC Austria

Belgium

VBT

Spain

COEXPHAL

Afrucat

PROEXPORT

France

Interprofession F&L d'Alsace

APFELSO

AOP Jardins de Normandie

Cerafel

Federation of Fruits & Vegetables of

Occitania

PACA Chamber of Agriculture

IDfel

Hyères Hortipole

OP des Cimes

Unicoque

Italy

Assomela

Finaf

Gruppo VI.VA

IOC

Romandiola

PDO Piedmont

PDO Italia

CIOP

Greece

Association of Imathia's Agricultural

Cooperatives

Asepop Velventos

Portugal

COTHN

Portugal Fresh

FNOP

Coopenela

Ireland

CMP

The Netherlands

DPA



2019
HIGHLIGHTS

2019 Highlights

JANUARY

CAP 2020 amendments proposed by AREFLH and supported by 18 MEPs

On 23 November 2018, AREFLH submitted to the European Parliament a document containing 13 amendments to the European Commission's proposal on the Common Agricultural Policy post 2020 (Strategic Plans), based on the work of AREFLH CMO expert group ([see the document](#)). After examining the amendments supported by the members of the European Parliament, 12 of the 13 amendments proposed by AREFLH were supported by a total of 18 MEPs from 5 different political groups (EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR, GUE-NGL).

MARCH

AREFLH General Assembly

The General Assembly was held in Bordeaux on 27 and 28 March 2019, at the headquarters of the New Aquitaine region. The aim of the meeting was to renew all mandates, from the Presidency to the Board of Directors, for a new three-year term.

The outgoing President and Vice-President Simona Caselli and Jean-Louis Moulon have been unanimously reconfirmed as heads of the association. The Board of Directors, composed of representatives of the regions and associations of producer organisations, was renewed.



MAY

AREFLH at Macfrut 2019 exhibition

The 36th edition of the International Fruit and Vegetable Fair Macfrut took place from 8 to 10 May in Rimini, Italy. It was the most international edition since the beginning of the fair with more than 50 countries present, 1,100 exhibitors and more than 1,500 buyers from all over the world.



Many international authorities were present on the opening day, such as the Minister of Agriculture of Paraguay Denis Lichi. The Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emanuela Del Re, opened the exhibition in the presence of the President of the Emilia-Romagna Region, Stefano Bonaccini, and many other local and national authorities.

AREFLH took advantage of its presence in Macfrut to visit most of its Italian producer organisations and met with representatives of the Emilia-Romagna region.

Future annual work programme to promote 2020

AREFLH and AREPO have drawn up a joint document containing recommendations concerning the drafting of the future 2020 annual work programme on the information and promotion of measures

concerning agricultural products implemented in the internal market and in third countries (see p.11). The document was sent to the Head of Unit "External Communication Policy and Promotion" of the Directorate-General for Agriculture (DG AGRI).

Kick-off meeting of the CONSOLE project

It was held from 22 to 24 May in Seville. More information about the project on page 20

Visit in PACA region

Jean-Louis Moulon and Andrea Tivoli went to the PACA region for a mission focused on the horticultural sector. A joint meeting between representatives of the Region, the Regional Chamber of Agriculture and Florisud was held to identify the work priorities for the sector.



JUNE

Meeting with DG CLIMA of the European Commission

On June 17, 2019, Andrea Tivoli, Europe project manager for AREFLH, and Karine Oswald-Poulet (IDfel Val de Loire), met the director of the "Climate change adaptation" unit of DG CLIMA, Ms. Malinowska, in order to present the activities of AREFLH, to better understand DG CLIMA's role in setting environmental and climate standards for EU agricultural policies, as well as to discuss the difficulties induced by the increased demands on environmental spending mandatory under the operational programmes of the new CAP regulation for producer organizations and their associations.

This meeting was an opportunity to underline the need to broaden and redefine the eligibility criteria for environmental measures. It was agreed that AREFLH would identify the best environmental practices in force which could and should be made eligible by both European and national regulations and submit its conclusions to the unit.

Chestnut Mission

From 1st to 9th June 2019, Spanish, French and Portuguese representatives of the EUROCASTANEA network went to Japan for an exploratory mission organised by Interco and AREFLH. The aim of this mission: a deeper knowledge of the Japanese chestnut sector with visits to companies, orchards, interviews with producers and processors, but also a visit to a research and experimentation centre.



INTERPERA 2019 brings international pear players closer together



The 11th edition of Interpera, co-organised by ANPP (Association Nationale Pommes Poires), the Morinière Experimental Station and AREFLH, took place in Touraine from 25 to 27 June 2019. Read more on p. 21.

JULY
AUGUST

CAP reform: AREFLH calls on the European deputies on the budget cuts

In July and August 2019, AREFLH raised awareness among MEPs to preserve the financial commitments of 2020 for POs in the fruit and vegetable sector, in order to avoid the budget cuts planned by the European Commission and the European Council.

[Read AREFLH's letter to the European deputies.](#)

SEPTEMBER

Meeting with DG ENVI of the European Commission

As a follow-up to the June meeting with DG CLIMA, a delegation from AREFLH met on September 19 with the "Land Use and Management" Unit of DG Environment.

This meeting was an opportunity for AREFLH to present its activities and discuss the current environmental regulatory framework on which producer organisations depend within the framework of the Common Organisation of the Fruit and Vegetable Markets.

AREFLH underlined several weaknesses of the system, mainly concerning the eligibility criteria of environmental measures in the operational programmes of the PO, and discussed the possible negative implications arising from higher environmental requirements and mandatory thresholds without accompanying measures.

European Chestnut Meetings

In 2019 the 10th European Chestnut Meeting was held in Portugal from 12 to 14 September.

The Portuguese chestnut association, Refcast, the Coopenela cooperative, as well as the municipalities of Trascoso and Penedono co-organised this event with the support of AREFLH.



OCTOBER

AREFLH, AREPO and AGRIREGIONS event



On 17 October, AREFLH, AREPO and AGRIREGIONS organised a conference on "Governance, common organisation of markets and geographical indications in the future CAP after 2020". This multi-stakeholder event brought together nearly 100 participants,

European and regional policy makers, representatives of professional organisations and civil society. The event provided an opportunity to discuss the current state of play of the CAP reform and to continue the debate on the proposed amendments to the objectives of the CMO and on the quality of fruit and vegetables, as well as on the role of European regions as managing authorities in the future CAP.



**Coalition of European
AGRIREGIONS**



AREFLH's new head office



AREFLH's Bordeaux team composed of Pauline Panegos, Secretary General, and Laetitia Forget, Communication Officer, has moved into new premises at the Bordeaux National Interest Market.

At a time when complementarity and network structuring are key elements in the success of a project, eight organisations in the fruit and vegetable sector whose head offices are located in the

Bordeaux region have decided to gather at the MIN de Brienne in Bordeaux to strengthen their complementary actions and skills and to act in a concerted manner for the sector. The regional and national structures that occupy the premises alongside AREFLH are the following ones :

- The national APO Carrots of France
- The national APO Asparagus from France
- AIM, Melon Interprofessional Association
- AIRE Fruits and Vegetables,
- Invenio, fruit and vegetable experimentation station in New Aquitaine
- IRFEL, national association of fruit and vegetable experimentation stations
- Propulso, association of regional players in the fruit and vegetable sector.

NOVEMBER

ICOP 2019

Jean-Louis Moulon and Andrea Tivoli travelled to Hamburg from 20 to 22 November 2019 for the 14th International Conference of Fruit and Vegetable Producers' Organisations (ICOP).

160 representatives of the fruit and vegetable industry from all over Europe and beyond gathered in Hamburg for this 3-day event, jointly organised by GFA Consulting and the Federal Association of Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisations (BVEO).



During the event, a wide range of expert lectures and debates on current political and economic developments for fruit and vegetable producer organisations were presented. The first block was devoted to the ongoing reforms of the CAP and the CMO, with a presentation by the European Commission and the German Ministry of Agriculture. Other topics included quality assurance, unfair trade practices and the development of export markets.

EUVRIN



Pauline Panegos and Andrea Tivoli travelled to the Czech Republic to attend the EUVRIN annual meeting, this year hosted by the Crop Research Institute in Prague.

Invitation to the General Meeting of Fruitveb

Pauline Panegos and Andrea Tivoli have been invited to make a presentation of AREFLH at the General Assembly of Fruitveb in Hungary on November 27th.

Fruitveb, the Hungarian interbranch organisation, provides the necessary professional support for the preparation of government decisions affecting the sector. Its tasks include: representing the Hungarian fruit and vegetable sector in the various EU forums, also contributing to the functioning and improvement of producer organisations, maintaining contacts with international professional organisations.

DECEMBER

The European chestnut sector presented its economic, social and environmental wealths to the European Parliament

On 4 December 2019, representatives of the chestnut sector from France, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Austria had the opportunity to present the current strengths and challenges of this sector to Members of the European Parliament.
(see page 22)



WORKING THEMES



The Common Agricultural Policy - CMO fruit and vegetables



The year 2019 was marked by the approval of the reports on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) on strategic plans and the Common Market Organisation (CMO) by the members of the European Parliament's COMAGRI, on the basis of the proposals presented by the European Commission in June 2018.

AREFLH was pleased with the positive outcome of the votes, as the provisions adopted represented an important step towards a more competitive, attractive and modern fruit and vegetable sector.

As regards the amendments to the regulation on strategic plans adopted by the Parliament's COMAGRI, we warmly welcomed the decision of the MEPs to support several of the legislative amendments proposed by AREFLH, such as :

- clarifying the scope of sectoral interventions for the fruit and vegetable sector by ensuring the inclusion of fruit and vegetables for processing;
- broadening the list of objectives by adding a specific objective on market orientation and competitiveness;
- enlarging the list of corresponding interventions by including a new measure "market competitiveness" linked to the above-mentioned objective ;
- partially reducing the mandatory threshold for environmental expenditure in operational programmes;
- providing additional financial support to associations of producer organisations;
- ensuring the transition between the current and future regime for operational programmes;
- introducing the eligibility of index insurance.

On 11 December 2019, the European Commission unveiled its new Communication on the European Green Deal, a roadmap to make the EU economy sustainable by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition fair and inclusive for all.

The document sets out a series of actions to stimulate resource efficiency in order to move towards a clean and circular economy and to combat climate change, reverse biodiversity loss and reduce pollution. It also outlines the investments needed and the financing tools available, and explains how the EC plans to achieve this inclusive transition.

The Communication on the European Green Agreement covers all sectors of the economy, including transport, energy, agriculture, buildings and industries such as steel, cement, ICT, textiles and chemicals. Below are the main points set out in the Commission's Communication :

The new European Green Deal: what impact on European agriculture?

A. Achieving a climate-neutral Europe by 2050

This proposal is the primary objective of the European Green Agreement. The EU will strive to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, a target that will be enshrined in a "European climate law" to be presented in early 2020. This ambitious target involves revising the EU's current climate targets for 2030, which aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40%, and setting a higher threshold of between 50 and 55%.

To achieve these additional reductions, the Commission will review and amend, if necessary, by June 2021 all relevant climate-related policies, including the Emissions Trading Directive, the Effort Sharing

Regulation, the Regulation on Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry, the Energy Efficiency Directive, the directive on renewable energy and CO2 emission performance standards for cars and vans, as well as proposing a package of new legislative measures such as proposals for a revision of the Energy Taxation Directive, for the creation of a mechanism to redirect certain areas of EU climate protection legislation and a new strategy for adaptation to climate change.

B. Strategy From Farm to Fork



The new commissioner for health and food safety, Stella Kyriakides, has been given the task of developing a "farm to fork" strategy, which aims to cover all stages of the food chain from production and processing to marketing, consumption and international trade in order to combat climate change, protect the environment and preserve biodiversity.

Scheduled for spring 2020, the new strategy aims to create a greener and healthier farming system and will include plans to significantly reduce the use and risks of chemical pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics.

The Farm to Fork Strategy will also contribute to the achievement of a circular economy. It will aim to reduce the environmental impact of the food processing and retail sectors by taking action on transport, storage, packaging and food waste. This will include combating food fraud and launching a process to identify and tackle the causes of food fraud, identify new innovative products for food and feed.

Finally, the proposal will aim to stimulate sustainable food consumption and promote healthy and affordable food for all by strengthening controls on imported food that does not comply with relevant EU environmental standards and proposing actions to help consumers choose healthy and sustainable diets and reduce food waste. The Commission also intends to explore new ways to better inform consumers, including through digital means, about the origin of foodstuffs, their nutritional value and their environmental footprint. Finally, the Farm to Fork strategy will also contain proposals to improve the position of farmers in the value chain.

C. CAP Strategic Plans

The Commission's proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy for 2021 to 2027 stipulate that at least 40% of the overall budget of the Common Agricultural Policy will contribute to climate action. In addition, the Commission intends to work with Member States and stakeholders to ensure that national strategy plans for agriculture reflect the ambition of the green deal and the farm-to-table strategy.

The Commission will ensure that these strategic plans are assessed against rigorous climate and environmental criteria. The plans should lead to the use of sustainable practices, such as precision farming, organic farming, agro-ecology, agro-forestry and higher animal welfare standards. By shifting the focus from compliance to performance, measures such as eco-regimes will aim to reward farmers for improved environmental and climate performance, including managing and storing carbon in the soil and improving nutrient management to improve water quality and reduce emissions.

Strategic plans will need to reflect an increased level of ambition to significantly reduce the use and risks of chemical pesticides, as well as the use of fertilisers and antibiotics. The Commission will identify the measures, including legislative ones, needed to achieve these reductions on the basis of a dialogue with stakeholders. New ways to increase the area under organic farming in Europe will be explored. The EU will also seek to develop innovative ways to protect crops from pests and diseases and examine the potential role of new and innovative techniques to improve the sustainability of the food system.

D. Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity



The Commission will present a biodiversity strategy by March 2020, to be followed by specific action in 2021. The strategy will set out global targets for biodiversity protection and commitments to address the main causes of biodiversity loss in the EU, underpinned by measurable targets that address the main causes of biodiversity loss.

The Biodiversity Strategy will also set out specific measures to achieve these objectives, such as extending the coverage of land and marine protected areas rich in biodiversity, building on the Natura 2000 network. Member States will also need to strengthen cross-border cooperation to protect and restore areas covered by the Natura 2000 network more effectively. The Commission

will consider drawing up a nature restoration plan and look at ways of providing funds to help Member States achieve this objective.

In addition, in order to better monitor, report, prevent and remedy pollution of air, water, soil and consumer products, the Commission will adopt in 2021 a zero pollution action plan for air, water and soil to preserve and restore biodiversity in lakes, rivers, wetlands and estuaries and to prevent and limit flood damage.

E. Research and innovation



With a proposed budget of €100 billion for the period 2021-2027, the Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Framework Programme will also contribute to the Green Deal. 35% of EU research funds will be earmarked for climate-friendly technologies, and a range of EU research programmes will focus primarily on environmental objectives.

Financing: the Just Transition Mechanism

In order to achieve these ambitious objectives, the Commission will present in 2020 a Just Transition Mechanism to facilitate the investment of €100 billion in the regions most exposed to the economic and social challenges of climate change-related transition in the next period of the Multiannual Financial Framework.

It will use and combine various sources of funding:

- EU budget
- National budgets through co-financing
- European Investment Bank (InvestEU programme) and private funds.

The mechanism will include a Fair Transition Fund to be implemented in the framework of cohesion policy, accompanied by appropriate technical assistance and the regulatory flexibility necessary for regions to make a successful transition.

The objective of this mechanism is to support the regions most affected by the transition to a climate-neutral economy. The mechanism aims to protect citizens, retrain workers and contribute to the development of climate-neutral economic activities. Each euro spent from the fund could be complemented by 2 or 3 euros from the region. EU state aid guidelines will be reviewed in this context so that national governments are able to directly support clean energy investments.

Research and innovation

European Task Force for Research and Innovation

Fruit and vegetables in the new Horizon Europe Framework Programme: an opportunity to address global food challenges

The Task Force for Research and Innovation in the Fruit and Vegetable Sector composed of AREFLH, Freshfel, EUFRIN and EUVRIN has submitted to the European Commission a vision in the framework of the publication of the new research framework programme Horizon Europe.



This four-page document sets out the key figures and characteristics of the European F&V sector and the main challenges ahead. The consortium also explains the main lines of its research priorities for the sector, which should lead to a research programme capable of effectively addressing the challenges facing the sector.

The European fruit and vegetable sector faces global challenges, including the need to increase competitiveness along the chain and the added value to products, processing towards sustainable production, supply chain and consumption, mitigating the effects of climate change, the impact of changing lifestyles on human health and well-being, increased ambition for food safety and security and reducing food losses and waste. The horticultural sector may not be able to respond adequately to these real and future challenges if the appropriate innovation and research needs and priorities are not identified.

However, the fruit and vegetable sector can play an important role in addressing these global challenges, for example in the area of climate action and environmental conservation. It can contribute to achieving the UN sustainable development goals, in particular zero hunger, health and well-being, responsible consumption and production and climate action.

Research in the fruit and vegetable sector would strengthen Europe's competitiveness: the fruit and vegetable sector concerns around 1.4 million farms, with a total turnover of the chain of around €150 billion. In order to further support all actors in the chain and increase the competitiveness of the sector, additional research and innovation efforts are needed under Horizon Europe on all segments of the complete supply chain to achieve the objectives of responsible consumption and production, sustainability, and increased competitiveness and value. Horizon Europe should stimulate the increased adoption of new technologies to address competitiveness challenges.

Research in the fruit and vegetable sector would promote a fair Europe: the fruit and vegetable sector proactively contributes to building a fair Europe for all its citizens by promoting an attractive, inclusive and affordable diet that improves human health and well-being by providing unique nutritional value that protects against cardiovascular disease, obesity and cancer. Ensuring a steady supply of fresh and safe fruit and vegetables, adapted to the needs of EU consumers, is essential to meet the food challenges on the horizon in terms of population growth, climate change and sustainability. Horizon Europe should make the necessary innovations more affordable, thus ensuring a fair income for producers, many of whom are small family farmers in the horticultural sector.

Research in the fruit and vegetable sector would promote a sustainable Europe: the EU fruit and vegetable industry is one of the most sustainable sectors of the EU agro-industry in terms of land use, producing around 21% of the value of total EU agricultural production with less than 3% of total land use. In addition, the sector invests heavily in research into alternatives to pesticides that are harmful to health and the environment and in increasing the sustainability of production systems. However, more research and innovation within Horizon Europe is needed to achieve the goals of health and well-being, responsible production, adapted to the effects of climate change.

Research in the fruit and vegetable sector would strengthen Europe's influence: the choice of themes to be funded under Horizon Europe highlights a message to the world. Through targeted research in the fruit and vegetable sector, Horizon Europe can highlight its ambitions for the value and quality of fresh produce, high standards of food safety, increased food security and a sustainable future for people and the planet in a competitive agri-food sector.

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the fruit and vegetable sector is highlighted and adequately financed in order to be able to respond to the imminent challenges facing our production and consumption patterns.

[Read the full document](#) in English

European projects

NUTRIMAN



AREFLH is a partner in this 30-month project (October 2018 - March 2021) funded as part of the Horizon 2020 programme.

Background

Currently, the fertilisers used, particularly minerals, are mostly made from fossil and "non-European" resources, which creates dependence on them and could lead to food insecurity. These mineral inputs sometimes escape from elementary cycles and participate in polluting events. This break in the cycle has been amplified by the geographical specialisation of agricultural activities around the world, with territories depleted in nutrients or in excess. It is in this context that the European Union wishes to revise its regulations on fertilisers in the near future.

The project

It aims to build a thematic network for the exchange of "ready to use" innovative knowledge, technologies and practices on bio-based fertilisers for the benefit of agricultural practitioners. The project focuses on the application of innovative and commercially mature results to market needs and current industrial practices.



The main objectives :

- To draw up an inventory of innovative research results from FP7 / H2020 / LIFE / Mature Task Forces in the field of technologies, methodologies and products for nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and nutrient recovery that are about to be put into practice, but not sufficiently known, both at the scale of industrial agriculture and on smaller scale farms.
- Evaluate innovative technologies for N, P nutrient recovery and new N, P fertilizer products and practices, both by experts and by potential end-users (farmers, farmers' associations, producer organisations).
- Dedicated and targeted communication to a diverse group of stakeholders to promote action and results.
- Disseminate the knowledge of agricultural practitioners on the results of innovative research on the recovery of under-exploited P and N with "ready-to-use" performance:
 - Collect practice-oriented multilingual summaries (in 8 languages) in the IEP-AGRI format.

- Develop innovative multilingual fertiliser application materials and training material, audiovisual material, information graphics for agricultural practitioners, farmers, farmers' organisations and Chamber of Agriculture advisory service providers.
 - Set up a multilingual interactive NUTRIMAN web platform.
 - Provide cross-border knowledge exchange and organise interactive dissemination and exploitation for practitioners and agricultural advisers.
 - Increase the flow of practical information between farmers in Europe in a geographically balanced way through the involvement of the EU network of farmers' and producers' organisations and effective networking with European organisations (COPA-COGECA, EUFRAS).
- Increased awareness among farmers on the revision of the fertilizer regulatory policy. Organise legal/policy education and training for farmers.

The consortium

It brings together 14 European partners: Terra Humana Ltd (Coordinator, Hungary), BaustoffForschung Institute (Germany), University of Ghent (Belgium), INAGRO (Belgium), Vlaco VZW (Belgium), CARTIF Foundation (Spain), Depuracion de Aguas de Mediterraneo SL (Spain), APCA (France), AREFLH (France), Chamber of Agriculture NAK (Hungary), University of Turin (Italy), EFFoST (Netherlands), ZLTO (Netherlands), IUNG-PIB (Poland).

More info at: www.nutriman.net

CONSOLE

The overall objective of CONSOLE is to stimulate innovation in the sustainable provision of Agri-Environmental Climate Public Goods (AECPGs) by EU agriculture and forestry, through the development of improved contractual solutions (i.e. relations between public administration, at different scales, and farmers).



To achieve this objective, the CONSOLE project has highlighted the following specific objectives:

- Develop an operational contractual framework that would be used to develop new and improved contracts, with solutions adapted to local contexts to facilitate policy development, stakeholder interaction and to encourage the adoption of contracts.
- Distil the lessons learned from past and ongoing experiences through structured qualitative evaluation of successful, innovative and effective contractual solutions in the EU and third countries for the provision of specific or multiple AECPG.
- Develop understanding of the acceptability and ease of implementation of innovative contractual solutions through surveys involving a wide range of farmers, rural landowners and other key contractual actors in 12 EU Member States.
- Understand the economic, social and environmental performance of new and innovative contract design options through in-depth empirical exploration and model simulation.
- Develop a Community of Practice with the actors involved and interested in the provision of AECPG to facilitate the co-construction, testing and implementation of new solutions, as well as to contribute to multiplying impacts through participatory co-training.
- To make CONSOLE results operational and easily accessible to a wide target audience of interested actors and stakeholders (farmers, agricultural advisers, administration, businesses)

along value chains, NGOs, etc.), thus contributing to a major transition in the way AECPGs are delivered in Europe.

The consortium

It is composed of 24 institutions, covering a wide range of actors (farmers, organisations, researchers, public administration, consulting companies, etc.).



More information on console-project.eu

Events

Interpera



The 11th edition of Interpera, the international pear congress, brought together 110 producers, processors, plant nurseries, experimentation centres and marketers. The presence of these experts from 9 countries (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Holland, Spain, Belgium, Turkey, Greece, South Africa, United States and South Africa) gave participants a broad spectrum of the sector in terms of production, recent developments and future prospects.

A key moment of the congress, the forecasts for summer pear production in Europe underlined the bad weather and the instability of the climate in the current campaign in all European producing countries, which will most certainly result in a drop in overall production. It should be remembered that in 2018 this European production amounted to 2.37 million tonnes.

The afternoon presentations focused on research and varietal innovation, as well as on practices undertaken to meet societal expectations, particularly in the context of eco-responsible orchards.



On the third day, congress participants joined the technical day at the Morinière Experimental Station, which that year broke a participation record with more than 500 registered participants.

Eurocastanea

Trade mission to Japan

In partnership with Interco (Agency for International Economic Cooperation of the New Aquitaine Region), AREFLH organised a professional mission to Japan for the actors of the chestnut sector.



For almost a week, member companies of the Eurocastanea network from France, Spain and Portugal were able to discover the characteristics of the Japanese sector in two production basins: Ibaraki and Gifu.

European Chestnut Days 2019

The 10th European Chestnut Meeting from 12 to 14 September.

The Portuguese chestnut association, Refcast, the Coopenela cooperative, as well as the municipalities of Trascoso and Penedono co-organised this event with the support of AREFLH.

[See the presentations at www.eurocastanea.org](http://www.eurocastanea.org)

Meeting with Members of the European Parliament

Thirty representatives of the Eurocastanea network presented the assets of the European chestnut sector to the European Parliament on 4 December.

MEP Pina Picierno (S&D), who opened the event, stressed the importance of chestnut orchards for the occupation of rural areas. She also highlighted the high nutritional value of this particular fruit with its high nutritional potential thanks, among other things, to its gluten-free composition. Other MEPs such as Isabel Carvalhais (S&D), Álvaro Amaro (EPP) and Paolo de Castro (S&D) were present and expressed their support for the European chestnut sector.

Their opinions all converged on the multi-functionality of the chestnut tree as a fruit and wood tree. Their interventions underlined how essential chestnut orchards are to the rural landscape as the trees often grow where no other production could be harvested. Orchards also contribute to the fight against climate change through their crucial role in carbon sequestration (carbon stock and flux) in woody biomass.

Furthermore, MEPs pointed out that old chestnut trees harbour exceptional biodiversity in their cavities.

These data are detailed in the European Chestnut White Paper, a report published by Eurocastanea and AREFLH, which was presented at the meeting and which identifies the costs, challenges and economic statistics of chestnut production in Europe.

Consult the Chestnut White Paper in [French](#) or [English](#).





ACTIONS IN
BRUSSELS
POSITION PAPERS

AREFLH's recommendations on the 2020 annual work programme on information and promotion actions concerning agricultural products implemented on the internal market and in third countries

The document, submitted in April 2019, makes the following proposals for the Commission's annual work programme:

- Maintaining a significant budget for promoting the consumption of fruit and vegetables on the internal market,
- Define a better balance in the budget lines between the internal market and third countries,
- Ensuring the accessibility of F&V in non-EU markets,
- Continued support to combat phytosanitary barriers in third countries,
- Distinction between fresh and processed fruit and vegetables (including preparations), budget allocation and data analysis,
- A better recognition of the added value of transnational consortia in the framework of multiple programmes.

[Read the full document](#)

Comments on the European Commission's proposal for an implementing regulation on market transparency in the food supply chain

The AREFLH warmly welcomed the Commission's initiative to implement a higher degree of market transparency in the food supply chain and believes that the proposed measures will contribute to greater clarity of price information and its transmission between the different actors, which should enable producers to improve their decision-making process, strengthen their bargaining power and better distribute added value throughout the food supply chain.

In the long term, market transparency should also contribute to better supply management, improve producer incomes and reduce market crises. However, AREFLH made the following observations on some of the provisions of the proposal which, in our opinion, need to be carefully assessed.

1. Market transparency in the fruit and vegetable sector: a complex supply chain :

AREFLH takes this opportunity to underline the specificity and complexity of the fruit and vegetable market, which is characterised by both variability and vulnerability. Fruit and vegetables are by definition highly perishable and highly dependent on several factors such as climatic conditions, the geopolitical context (e.g. the Russian embargo), fierce competition from third country producers, i.e. elements that have a significant impact on supply and demand. The variation of these factors can lead to high price volatility, which in turn could lead to a market crisis.

It is also important to bear in mind that each product category includes several different varieties, each with their own specificities in terms of production methods, maturity, quality and price. In addition, it should be taken into account that the fruit and vegetable supply chain is made up of several layers of diverse actors (producers, producer organisations and their associations, wholesalers, traders, processors, organised large-scale distribution, retailers, etc.) who all experience different market situations and prices.

Therefore, in order to successfully increase market transparency, legislators should take these factors into account and encourage the development of effective tools to rebalance the current asymmetry of market and price information between producers and downstream operators.

2. Ensure the accuracy of the data and the homogeneity of the methodology for setting representative prices:

AREFLH welcomed the Commission's decision to amend the implementing regulation (EU) 2017/1185 by including the collection of data for non-weekly price notifications and production and market information notifications in the fruit and vegetable sector. However, we would like to stress that a key aspect of the success of this initiative will be to ensure a high degree of accuracy and reliability of the information transmitted by Member States and national operators. To this end, the methods chosen by Member States to set representative prices should be as standardised as possible in order to allow comparability of data between EU countries.

In addition, operators must clearly and precisely indicate the typology of the data transmitted (harvested prices, prices at the farm gate, at the exit of the packing station, sorted or packed) and provide additional information on the characteristics and main market trends of their product (variety, quality, weather conditions and production forecasts). The diversity of the data to be transmitted is a critical factor which could be solved by a propaedeutic analysis of the commercial organisation of each Member State in order to define the most accurate and relevant ones. The European Commission should also set up a review procedure to assess the accuracy and consistency of the results obtained by this new mechanism and make adjustments to the data collection methodology if necessary.

3. Consider a future extension of the implementing regulation to other productions

AREFLH understands the Commission's decision to include the collection of data for major productions such as tomatoes, apples, oranges, peaches and nectarines and processed tomatoes because of their commercial importance in terms of production and consumption. However, AREFLH considers that other fruit and vegetable productions, although smaller, should not be definitively excluded from this regulation. On the contrary, the Commission should, in the near future, consider including other products that would greatly benefit from a more transparent environment, thus strengthening the position of their producers in the supply chain. The coverage of these additional products could be achieved gradually and take into account their own market specificities (very unbalanced relations between upstream and downstream actors, tendency of the product to price volatility and market crises...). Any inclusion of new products could be considered according to the composition of the "family basket", which is being surveyed, in terms of type and frequency of purchase, by different qualified operators in each Member State.

AREFLH/AREPO/AGRIREGIONS Conference



On 17 October 2019, the European networks AREFLH, AREPO and AGRIREGIONS joined forces to organise a conference on "Governance, Common Market Organisation and Geographical Indications in the future CAP after 2020". This multi-stakeholder event, which brought together more than 100 participants ranging from European and regional policy-makers to representatives of professional organisations and civil society, was an opportunity to discuss the current state of CAP reform and to continue the debate on the



proposals for changes to the CMO and the quality schemes for fruit and vegetables, as well as on the role of European regions as managing authorities in the future CAP.

Three round tables were organised on the following themes:

- The role of European regions in the new CAP
- The fruit and vegetables CMO in the CAP reform
- The CAP's new approach to geographical indications.



The second round table provided an opportunity to discuss the current challenges facing the fruit and vegetable sector. Moderator Simona Caselli, Regional Minister of Agriculture of the Emilia-Romagna region

and President of AREFLH, reflected on the success of the F&V CMO, a programme that has given the best results under the CAP and which therefore needs to be strengthened.

In this respect, and in view of the very environmental ambitions of the new Von der Leyen Commission, producer organisations must be given the right mix of support and tools to face the crucial challenges posed by climate change, the market and plant health crisis or the decline in fruit and vegetable consumption.

Invited to share her views on how the producer organisation and the F&V regime can be strengthened, Clara Aguilera MEP (S&D) recalled that the F&V CMO has proved to be an efficient and cost-effective tool that needs to be consolidated through better concentration of supply, a crucial step if we want to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain. The new CAP proposal does not contain major changes to the CMO for fruit and vegetables, which has been consolidated with the adoption of the general regulation. "However, we must bear in mind that as things stand, the fruit and vegetable regime does not have the tools to cope with a major crisis, hence the need to rethink risks and crisis prevention/management tools".

When asked how producer organisations can make the most of the risk prevention and management tools currently available under the F&V CMO, Jean-Louis Moulon, President of AREFLH Producers' College, recalled that the F&V scheme represents only 3% of the CAP's overall budget, whereas it accounts for around 18% of total agricultural production. In order to face market-related problems on a global scale, as well as health, social and climate challenges, additional investment in terms of the budget devoted to the CMO should be taken into consideration. Luc Vanoirbeek, Chair of the Copa Cogeca F&V working group, highlighted the threats posed by climate change and plant health emergencies, stressing that the CMO is indeed a remarkable tool but cannot be considered as the solution to all problems: the F&V sector still needs support from the other CAP mechanisms. Part of the solution to these problems lies in international collaboration: we need to look beyond our borders and share experiences of innovation and best practices in different countries.



Finally, the President also asked the speakers about the crucial need to address trade and R&D policies in the F&V sector: Maria Teresa Cháfer Nàcher, Director General of Agriculture of the Valencia Region, stressed the need to review current European trade policy to ensure that EU farmers are able to compete on a level playing field with producers from third countries. "It is of paramount importance to recover our natural market, which is the European market. We need to better

connect the producer to the consumer, so that they can distinguish and recognise European production and improve their consumption". Ms Nacher also called for increased funding for research and innovation in the F&V sector: research and innovation policies and advice on adapting to climate change are essential for European producers. As severe weather events are becoming more and more recurrent, we need to react more quickly in terms of R&I and policy development.

In her conclusions, Simona Caselli said: "The CMO in the fruit and vegetable sector has proven time and again that it is an extremely effective tool that must be preserved and strengthened under the future CAP. However, there is an urgent need to strengthen its crisis prevention and management tools in order to better address the challenges posed by climate change and plant health emergencies".

AREFLH's proposals for dealing with phytosanitary emergencies in the fruit and vegetable sector

In November 2019, AREFLH formulated the following proposals to counter the phytosanitary crises in certain regions of the EU, particularly those affected by the proliferation of the devil's bug (*Halyomorpha Halys*):

- Establish an effective mechanism to prevent and manage plant health crises at EU level,
- Broaden the scope and financial support for crisis prevention and management measures under the F&V CMO,
- Prevention in the face of the risk of loss of recognition of fruit and vegetable producer organisations,
- Encourage research projects on pest infestations,
- Ensure the availability of effective phytosanitary treatments.

[Read the full document](#)

Position on the environmental regulatory framework of the F&V CMO in the new CAP

[To read the full document, please click here.](#)

The main obstacles highlighted by AREFLH are the following:

1- Strong subsidiarity granted to Member States, which are able to complement EU legislation with additional national rules:

According to Regulation 892/2017, Member States have the right to establish a non-exhaustive list of environmental actions and their conditions in their national strategy. While this provision should in theory allow national governments to better adapt EU provisions to their own specificities, in reality it often results in an additional level of bureaucracy that POs have to comply with in order to achieve their environmental objectives. Moreover, this subsidiarity favours the creation of a regulatory "patchwork" and thus a lack of homogeneity in the environmental regulations of EU Member States.

2- Difficulty in achieving the mandatory percentage reduction in input use :

Regulation 892/2017 defines the eligibility criteria for environmental investments through the achievement of quantifiable results (i.e. % reduction in the consumption of water, energy or plant protection products). However, as these requirements are very strict, actions having an environmental impact are regularly relegated to the other objectives of the POs' operational programme.

For example :

- some investments do not meet the performance requirements to validate them as "environmental" in the operational programmes although their positive effect is clearly

demonstrated (for example, certain types of sprayers that save between 3 and 7% of all the products they apply, depending on the size and shape of the plot).

- some environmental investments are not repeated every year (e.g. investments in water recycling in stations or the purchase of tensiometric probes that measure the water needs of the soil, the investment remains for several years, but only appears once in the operational programme).
- some actions are entirely financed by the PO without any contribution from the EU, such as weed trials, development of prototypes targeting pest control

On the other hand, the EU derogation which grants eligibility to environmental investments allowing a reduction of at least 7% of production inputs can only be used if the investments made provide at least one additional environmental benefit, which is often difficult to demonstrate.

3- Compulsory environmental actions reduce the number of eligible measures:

As many existing environmental actions are already mandatory under European regulations (greening, cross-compliance, sustainable use of plant protection products, etc.), it is essential to take the necessary steps to ensure that these actions are implemented in a sustainable manner. They cannot be considered as environmental actions in the POs' operational programmes. Therefore, this obviously hinders the POs' capacity to carry out environmental actions in their operational programmes, since it is difficult to develop actions that are carried out annually and that are additional to those that are mandatory. Similarly, some actions are covered by other sources of funding (DFAIT, EAFRD, organic production aid) which contributes to further reducing the number of measures available under the CMO.

Furthermore, under the new CAP, the "national eco-schemes" that will replace greening (commitment to biodiversity actions) could remove actions / interventions that are currently essential in the CMO in order to reach the current environmental percentage. In this case, it will be important to argue that the obligation to respect national eco-schemes should be considered as pre-filled under the CMO, given that the strategic plans for the fruit and vegetable sector (see articles 43-44 and 45 of the proposal for the new CAP) already oblige POs to have a mandatory minimum percentage of expenditure for environmental actions and investments (e.g. greening in the current CAP, for which the CMO is exempted).

Similarly, the content of the various national action plans on the sustainable use of plant protection products (application of Directive 128/2009) will have to be closely monitored which, as with the eco-schemes, could make certain actions/interventions mandatory and therefore reduce the eligibility of certain measures.



4- Lack of studies certifying the environmental value of certain actions through independent bodies or experts:

To be eligible, most environmental actions must lead to clear and quantifiable results in terms of input reduction. Failing this, the expected environmental benefit must be demonstrated ex ante by studies or technical documents whose consistency must be validated by an independent qualified body or expert approved by the Member State. However, too often these studies are not carried out by the Member States, which limits the POs' capacity to apply measures that are nevertheless included in the national environmental strategies.

5- The current rules focus only on climate change mitigation measures, but not on the development of climate change adaptation measures:

Adaptation to climate change is currently not taken into account in environmental measures. In fact, climate change is above all reflected in hazards that are becoming increasingly frequent, increasingly serious and which can now occur at times when they did not previously occur (climate change is not

linear, it is not a "uniformly" warmer or colder or wetter climate for which a change in culture could be imagined). Thus, the same region may experience a succession of climatic hazards during the same year (drought, heat waves, frosts, floods, parasitic invasions). However, it is difficult for a crop to resist the occurrence of such sudden and repeated climatic hazards. It is therefore necessary that certain actions (including some already existing such as hail or frost control equipment and others that are currently allowed in the OPs under other types of measures) can in particular cases be considered as environmental adaptation measures that can limit the negative impact of climate change on F&V crops.

6- Rethinking the notion of additional cost of environmental actions (excluding investments) :

For environmental actions that are not considered as investments (e.g. use of auxiliaries, sex-disconfusion techniques) only the additional cost is covered by the operational programme, without taking into account that more environmentally friendly techniques are often more difficult to implement. They require staff training and they are riskier techniques for the producer because their effectiveness is more uncertain compared to other techniques (e.g. phytosanitary treatments). Similarly, considering that public aid in the Operational Fund only covers 50% of the costs, it can be seen that the incremental cost method is not an incentive and leaves the PO and its members with all the risks and a large part of the financial burden.

For this reason, AREFLH believes that actions (excluding investments) should benefit from the same rules as other types of actions, which means that the total cost of the action (and not only the additional costs) should be considered.

In addition, it should be stressed that too often Member States do not carry out studies determining the additional costs of environmental actions not linked to investments (corresponding to the difference between traditional costs and costs actually incurred and income foregone resulting from the action, with the exception of additional income and cost savings, where Member States have the possibility to set standard flat rates or standardised scales of unit costs according to Annex III of the delegated Regulation 891/2017). This means that while in theory certain environmental actions are foreseen in the national strategy of a Member State, in practice they cannot be implemented in the PO's operational programme without risking a clearance of accounts refusal by EU auditors in the case of ex-post controls.

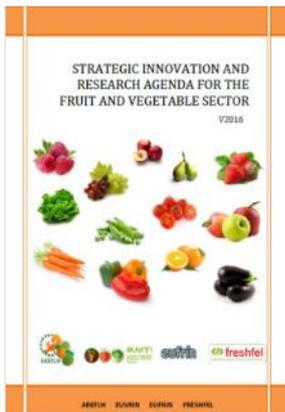
A large, arched greenhouse with a complex metal frame and white plastic covering. The interior is filled with long, neat rows of potted pansies in various colors including yellow, purple, blue, orange, and red. The plants are densely packed and appear to be in the final stages of growth. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down the length of the greenhouse, creating a strong sense of depth. The lighting is bright and even, typical of a well-lit indoor growing environment.

PUBLICATIONS
COMMUNICATION

Publications / Communication

- Regio'Com
- White Paper on the CMO Fruit and Vegetables, a positive report on 20 years of the CMO
- The Chestnut White Paper
- Strategic innovation and research agenda for the Fruit and Vegetable sector (SIRA)
- Tasty recipes based on fruit and vegetables from AREFLH regions

All documents are available on [www.areflh.org / our publications](http://www.areflh.org/ourpublications)



Our means of communication

- The website www.areflh.org
- Our weekly emails (AREFLH info) to members of the association only, Regions and POs/APOs, on news from the sector and the European institutions.
- The monthly, public newsletter, sent to members and subscribers. It includes a retrospective of the association's activity, information about our members, news from the sector and the EU, as well as an agenda of fruit and vegetable events in Europe. [Read the newsletter](#)
- The Twitter account [@areflh](https://twitter.com/areflh).





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