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Agriculture and Fisheries

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President **Fernand Etgen**
Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Consumer
Protection

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none

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

ITEMS DEBATED

AGRICULTURE

Market developments

The Council was briefed by the Commission on a package of measures to address the difficult situation of several agricultural sectors. An exchange of views between ministers followed ([11588/15](#)).

In response to the difficulties currently being faced by these sectors the Commission put forward a package of measures worth EUR 500 millions. These measures are intended to help address difficulties in cash-flow faced by farmers, stabilise markets and address the functioning of the supply chain.

During the debate ministers expressed strong concerns about recent developments in a range of agricultural sectors, in particular the dairy and pigmeat sectors and the need to respond rapidly and efficiently to the difficulties farmers are currently facing.

While supporting the package presented by the Commission, delegations underlined the need to be more precise about the content of the package. The provision of direct targeted aid scheduled by the Commission, in particular the allocation between member states and the affected sectors, is a key point for many delegations. As regards the facility to advance part of the direct payments and rural development payments, most ministers emphasized that flexibility in the controls was needed to help facilitate implementation. In general they considered that, over the medium term, the strengthening of promotion measures and the planned work on the supply chain were important issues.

Some member states pointed out the interest of a temporary increase of the intervention price for skimmed milk powder. Many delegations supported also the Commission in its negotiations with Russia on sanitary issues for pigmeat. The possibility to relax the state aids regime was also mentioned by some delegations.

Among the measures proposed by the Commission, the Council noted in particular:

- the facility for member states to advance an important part of direct payments and rural development payments from mid-October;
- a new private storage scheme for milk products;
- the reopening of private storage for pigmeat;
- an additional funding for promotion of dairy products and pigmeat in the EU and third countries;
- a further intensification of efforts to tackle non tariff barriers in third countries;
- the strengthening of the Milk Market Observatory and the development of a similar tool for pigmeat;
- the establishment of High Level Group to improve the functioning of the supply chain with possible improvements for farmers;
- a better use of the "milk package" and the preparation for 2016 of the report on the functioning of the milk package initially scheduled for 2018;
- a political agreement on the proposal on the school scheme for fruit and vegetable and milk.

The Presidency indicated that technical aspects of the Commission package will be examined by the Council preparatory bodies in the coming days. The ministers will come back on the issue on the occasion of the informal agriculture meeting in Luxembourg on 15 September.

Any other business

– *African swine fever*

The Council was briefed by the Estonian delegation supported by Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, on the current state of play of the African swine fever (ASF) outbreak in those countries ([11555/15](#)).

ASF is a highly contagious viral disease affecting wild boar and domestic pigs. ASF was first detected in Lithuania and then in Poland at the beginning of 2014. Since then, cases in wild boars and pigs have also been identified in Estonia and Latvia. Some member states supported the views of the countries affected to see the development of a broad, long-term strategy to fight the disease.

– *Drought in Eastern Europe*

The Polish and the Romanian delegations briefed the ministers of the consequences of the severe drought affecting their countries this summer ([11593/15](#)).

Some member states supported their request for a specific support programme for the crops and the animal production affected by the drought.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED
