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## **Policy Paper of the German Rural Youth Association (BDL)**

### **Demands for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2020**

- We want to protect and preserve the European agriculture because the survival of cultural landscapes and the attractiveness of rural areas is dependent on it.
- Preservation of jobs due to the added value of agriculture in rural areas: In addition, farms do not only safeguard jobs locally, but also in the upstream and downstream of the value chain. Agriculture is diverse and at the same time elementarily integrated into rural life, which makes it hard to quantify its overall social performance. This includes climate change, but also social demands that young farmers have to deal with so that they can shape agriculture for the future.
- As young farmers, we want to maintain the high German quality standards and expand them further. To this end, EU financial support must compensate for the added value of higher production standards and environmental requirements compared with other producing. It thus supports all use of arable land and the preservation of domestic production as well as the rationality of food.

#### ***Unified solutions on a European level***

- The current financial volume of European agricultural policy must be maintained, particularly in the area of the first pillar. A redeployment of funds from the first to the second pillar is only acceptable if the funds continue to go to farmers.
- Furthermore, it is necessary that the pay-outs are proportional to the cost of living in the respective member states. At the same time, site-specific production disadvantages must also be compensated.
- In addition to financial support, production standards need to be harmonised in order to avoid distortion of competition within the EU. For this reason, the decoupling of payments from production must also be implemented immediately in all Member States. To date, this has taken place exclusively in Germany for all production sectors.
- Furthermore, the BDL sees the need for a strong de-bureaucratization of the system, especially with regard to applications.

#### **The BDL demands**

...to maintain the financial volume of European agricultural policy,  
...to reallocate funds from the first to the second pillar only if the funds continue to go to farmers,  
...the harmonisation of production standards and thus a Europe-wide uniform system,  
...the decoupling of payments from the amount of production in all sectors and EU member states.

#### ***Limitations of subsidisation***

- The BDL is of the opinion that the high quality of products produced in Germany depends to a large extent on the very good training and expertise of the farmers.
- For this particular reason, direct payments should only be granted to applicants with professional training, for example in the fields of agriculture or animal husbandry, viticulture or forestry. The

professional training can take the form of a course of study or training or further education. In order to realize this, more educational opportunities must be created.

- The support is to be limited to companies in main and secondary employment. This will ensure that only farmers and agricultural production will be strengthened by funding from the European agricultural budget.
- The BDL is also in favour of linking the age limit for the recipients of direct payments to the retirement age. Such an impetus for a change of generation opens up new opportunities for young people to take over businesses and make agriculture fit for the future.

### **The BDL demands**

- ... A limitation of subsidies to trained professionals in the green branch and
- ... To limit the age of recipients to the retirement age.

### ***Future design of the first pillar***

- Designing the content of the first pillar, the key points of the current greening for the next funding period urgently need to be revised.
  - o This requires bundling ecological measures, making them practical and flexible, and only implementing them if they have added value for the environment.
- In this sense, the BDL demands on the one hand that the forest is been recognised as an ecological priority area, in order to reward farmers for their ecological services in forestry and on the other hand to enable the agricultural use of the ecological priority areas.
- The use of pesticides in legume cultivation must be permitted by the requirements of greening to secure the German protein crop strategy (increase the production of protein crops in Europe).
- Finally, the definition of permanent grassland must also be improved in order to maintain the arable status of the areas, as the five-year period will lead to an increased conversion of the areas.
- It is necessary to maintain and expand support for young farmers in the first pillar in order to counteract the aging process in the agricultural sector. The BDL is committed to ensuring that two percent of the national funds under the first pillar are used to support young farmers.

### **The BDL demands**

- ... to revise the requirements of greening with regard to ecological priority areas and permanent grassland
- ... to maintain support for young farmers in the first pillar and to use at least two percent of the national funds of the first pillar.

### ***Design of the second pillar***

- We are calling for more second-pillar co-financing for attractive and viable agricultural programmes. On the one hand, the promotion of resource-saving technologies, for example for the application of fertilizers and plant protection agents and on the other hand, innovative technologies, for example in the field of smart farming, are to be expanded.
- It is a joint task to minimise resistance (genomic and metabolic) in the future, which is why appropriate and professional plant protection in the second pillar must be assessed in the same way as animal welfare.
- In addition, the promotion of modernisation measures on existing infrastructure to meet new standards and the expansion of regional marketing networks and alternative operating structures are to be stepped up.
- As part of the agricultural investment promotion programme (AIP), the share of the premium support granted is to remain at 40 percent of the eligible costs. However, it should be possible to add the young farmer's allowance. In addition, the AIP should also enable the purchase of a farm to be eligible for support.
- Furthermore, support for young farmers must continue to be anchored in the second pillar of the CAP. This support is needed, for example, for restructuring of the farm and transfers as well as

business start-ups, as these are associated with a number of additional costs (e.g. expert opinions, notary fees).

### **The BDL demands**

...a bundling of practical and attractive agricultural programmes in the second pillar of the CAP,  
...higher co-financing for agriculture under the second pillar of the CAP, including uniform national co-financing rates,  
...to continue to anchor the promotion of young farmers in the second pillar of the CAP and to implement it nationally,  
...to be able to add the young farmers' subsidy from the agricultural investment support programme to the maximum total value of the subsidies granted in eligible costs.

### ***Securing sustainable agriculture***

- This reorganisation of financial support requires longer transitional periods, which is why the current system must be maintained for the time being. However, the BDL does not consider the general maintenance of the two-pillar system to be sustainable in the long term.
- Therefore, the next funding period must be used to develop a new financing system. To this end, the much-discussed motto "public funds for public services" must be filled with content, whereby young farmers must definitely be involved, as they are shaping the future of agriculture.
- As young farmers, we are aware of our special responsibility towards nature and are prepared to provide further ecological services on a voluntary basis. However, in order to be able to refrain from regulatory measures, it is imperative that farmers are financially remunerated for the additional services provided within the framework of biodiversity or climate protection. When all services on a farm are measured, farms are given an additional incentive to provide ecological services on their land.
- Regional differences must be taken into account in order to guarantee an actual added value of the services. However, this must not lead to a large number of new measures under the new system. The value of these achievements must be scientifically sound and not motivated by political purposes. Rather, action must be goal-oriented and not action-guided, while retaining the entrepreneurial freedom of decision.

### **The BDL demands**

...an objective discussion on new forms of CAP design with the involvement of young farmers and  
...scientifically backed values of landscape elements in the evaluation of ecological performance.