

National Rural Network Malta

newsletter

4th Edition
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Dear All,

Welcome to the fourth edition of the NRN Malta newsletter! The NRN Malta has generated substantial interest in the past months both through the distribution of the first three e-newsletters and also through the various activities and information sessions organised. We would like to keep you informed of all recent developments in the field of agriculture and rural development policy.

Thus, the fourth issue of the NRN newsletter mainly revolves around the future of the Common Agricultural Policy and the development of a basis for consultation for the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

This newsletter gathers the feedback of a few of the many stakeholders participating in the consultation process being conducted by the National Rural Network Malta. The planned activities and events are also being highlighted in the last part of the newsletter.

We strongly encourage you to read the National Rural Network newsletter and provide additional feedback on the issues under discussion.

The NRNM Team
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Photo - DOI - Reuben Piscopo



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The Common Agricultural Policy



The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is determined at European Union level by the Governments of the 27 Member States. Its objectives are to support farmers' incomes and to encourage them to produce high quality products demanded by the market. The CAP encourages farmers to seek new development opportunities, such as environmentally friendly energy sources.

The context of the CAP reform



The CAP reform discussions are based upon the EU's New Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the EU2020 Vision. This reform presents Malta with an opportunity to learn from the current (2007-2013) Rural Development Programme, in order to establish a better, more efficient and more effective programme for the coming years.

The European Commission proposed significant changes in the CAP framework, including elements of redistribution of Pillar 1 direct payments and streamlining and improved targeting of Pillar 2 Rural Development aids. This process of reform presents an opportunity for Malta to think strategically on how to make best use of the available funds from Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 of the CAP in the 2014-2020 programming period. This fosters the link for more viable and sustainable farming with the future development of the rural sector.

A strategic Approach to Malta's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

The Managing Authority for Rural Development appointed the University of Gloucestershire (UK) to undertake a study with the aim of developing and presenting a new strategy for rural development and agricultural policy in the Maltese Islands. This strategy will promote and sustain profitable and competitive agriculture, vibrant rural areas and a healthy rural environment, within a wider context of developing the contribution of multifunctional agriculture and rural activities to the national economy.

An analysis of the present situation in Malta presented a number of concerns which need to be addressed in the future. These concerns include:

- Important sectoral challenges;
- The perception that agriculture pollutes;
- Structural programs in Malta, such as land fragmentation and marketing;
- Farming and rural development is not appreciated as much as it should be;
- Other political issues related to rural development (water, tourism, planning);
- A relatively low level of productivity;
- A declining number of farmers and human resources;
- Weak marketing structures in certain sectors;
- Weak links between sectors;
- Lack of cooperation.

It is vital that these concerns are put at the forefront during the consultation process leading up to the establishment of a new Rural Development Programme for Malta 2014-2020. It is believed that the new CAP will bring a number of opportunities which need to be utilised in the best possible way. It will be possible for stakeholders to have better direct contact with the markets, and produce new crops and products. There will be more opportunities for the use of alternative energy sources, as well as better access to training and education for farmers.

There is also the possibility of strengthening supply chains, and developing faster, and better reactions to changes in the market. It will also be possible for regulators, consumers and producers to work more closely together than ever before.



How are the CAP reform proposals going to affect Malta?



The new CAP reform, as being proposed by the European Commission, could impact Malta in the following way:

- The introduction of new instruments under Pillar 1. These consist of; coupled aid, a simpler system for small-scale farming operations, support for young farmers and the opportunity for new entitlement allocations;
- With regards to Pillar II, the changes proposed are the following: a reduced number of measures which will be more

flexible than those were in the current period and based around six common strategic objectives, a new emphasis on innovation, competitiveness and sustainability, and the potential for a Rural Development Programme which is more focussed on themes aimed at addressing Malta's specific priorities.

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRRA) is actively engaged in securing the interests of the Maltese agricultural sector in discussions with the European Commission. MRRRA will be striving to ensure that the outcome is one which ensures that Maltese farmers' activity continues to be supported in the best manner.

The Role of the Maltese National Rural Network in the CAP Consultation process

The National Rural Network Malta (NRNM) has a vital role in the CAP Consultation Process, in preparation for Malta's next Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. It is the main tool as to how the MRRRA can acknowledge the views of the



The RDP 2014-2020 Consultation Process

Six working groups will be formed around the six themes presented during the NRNM Conference. These working groups will be composed of representatives from the various sectors along with officials from the MRRRA. It is planned that these working groups will meet on a periodical basis between September 2012 and March 2013 in order to discuss specific themes according to the needs of each sector. The aim is to achieve an analysis of a wide range of issues affecting the different aspects of rural development, with the direct participation of rural stakeholders.



The Conference encouraged all individuals and organisations with a genuine interest in Malta's rural development policy to participate in these working groups. The audience was informed that working group participants would be expected to attend formal working group meetings, exchange ideas and express their concerns and opinions with other participants, explore new ideas

arising from other participants' involvement, and use their own knowledge and experiences in order to help and be involved in the development of a strategy for the new Rural Development Programme covering the period 2014-2020.

Such participation will be beneficial to all stakeholders. Through the input and feedback of the participants it will be possible to design measures which will aid rural development and will be of value to all agricultural holdings, businesses and rural communities in Malta.

A feedback form was circulated to all conference attendees in order to identify who would be interested in forming part of these working groups. The response received has already been positive, with a number of people expressing their interest in participating in the consultation process. However, anybody else who also wants to be part of this or would like further information is encouraged to contact the Managing Authority within the MRRRA on 22924269.



different agricultural sectors and other rural stakeholders.

The NRNM has been very active in this respect: holding wide discussions with the various sectors and performing technical analyses about the proposed changes in the new CAP Regulation, organising seminars and consultation meetings, participating in fairs, setting up interviews and performing telephone surveys with stakeholders. All this has been done in close collaboration with experts in agriculture and rural development, both local and foreign, as well as with the various sector representatives and direct beneficiaries from the current Rural Development Programme. The main objective has been to have an exchange of ideas and experiences between those forming part of the rural community in order to reach a common understanding as to how best address the opportunities and challenges of the future CAP.

Following the analyses and consultations undertaken, an NRN Conference was held on the 15th of June, 2012. During this conference, six themes were presented to the audience, including:

- Increasing returns to the fresh produce sector and improving efficient input use;
- Improving long-term sustainability of the livestock sector in Malta;
- Food-processing and adding value - establishing quality chains and new products;
- Direct sales of fresh produce;
- Making a high quality rural visitor experience;
- Enhancing the landscape and adapting to future water challenges.

NRN Activities

The Maltese NRN is particularly instrumental in promoting the RDP Axis and Measures. NRNM played an important role in the setting up and the development of the Leader approach in Malta. It is continuously working to involve and include the participation of all rural actors and stakeholders on horizontal thematic areas.

NRN Malta committee meetings

- 10th July 2012, Birdpark Malta
- 20th April 2012, Dingli Interpretation Centre

Participation in Imnarja 2012

Dates: 28th June - 19.00 - 1.00
29th June - 6.00 - 14.00

The Managing Authority, the NRNM and the three LAGs participated in the Imnarja Festivities 2012.

Through its stand, the Managing Authority featured a DVD on the Common Agricultural Policy and provided information on funds and projects financed under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

This year, the NRNM had the objective of fostering education on the CAP among children. A substantial number of children attended the NRNM stand wherein they coloured drawings related to agriculture and rural development. Children participated in a drawing competition.

Children were given the opportunity to milk a wooden cow constructed specifically for them.

The LAGs provided information on their Actions within their respective Local Development Strategy. Moreover, the LAGs also displayed and offered tasting of their regional produce.



Participation in TV Programmes

Malta u lil Hinn Minnha

Transmission of a feature on the role of the NRNM in relation to the CAP reform and the consultation process being undertaken for the preparation of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Date: Sunday 30th June 2012.

Participation in the Dairy Festival

Għargħur
Date: 6th May, 2012



NRNM is constantly working in parallel with DG AGRI and ENRD. Throughout the year NRNM organises Steering Committee and Coordination Committee meetings to discuss the current situation of Rural Development in Malta and ways forward for the agricultural sector. NRNM representatives also attend and participate in NRN meetings organised by the different Member States.

NRN Activities

Participation in the Flowers Festival

Bisazza Street, Sliema
Dates: 7-9th June 2012



Participation in the MCAST EXPO fair in order to increase awareness on the role of the Managing Authority, Paying Agency and the NRNM among students and the general public.

Dates

- Friday 22nd June
- Tuesday 26th June, 2012



National Rural Network Conference, Mount St. Joseph - 15th June 2012

The Managing Authority launched Measure 421 - Transnational Cooperation on the 12th of June, 2012 and it will remain open till the 12th of October, 2012.

Participation in the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) photo competition through the LAGs. The winning photos may be seen through the following link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/images/en/thumbnail_029.cfm

Compilation of a questionnaire on how rural areas are perceived by young people. 29 replies have been received.

Upcoming Events

Working Group Meetings for the preparation of the drafting process of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

N.B - Dates are still to be announced

Link with our European Counterparts:

European Network for Rural Development (ENRD):

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>

Spread the word:

Inform and encourage other stakeholders to be added to our mailing list by sending us an email on:

rdd.mrra@gov.mt

Make a link to the MA website on your own website.

www.mrra.gov.mt/ma

Let us know what you're up to:

Send us information about relevant news, campaigns and initiatives within your organisation, area or region to be promoted on our website.

Do have any feedback or suggestions?

The NRN newsletter team looks forward to receiving feedback and suggestions as to continue improving this publication. Send us an email on:

rdd.mrra@gov.mt

Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013



Co-financed through Technical Assistance
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Co-financing Rate: 75% European Union, 25% Government of Malta



Europe Investing in Rural Areas