

Gurteen Agricultural College
Environmental and Sustainable
Farming

Level 6 Certification

In association with

Susliving

Module 6

Sustainable Farming and Environmental
Protection Schemes, Biotechnologies

6.5 Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

What is the CAP?

The main objective is to ensure a decent standard of living for farmers and to provide a stable and safe food supply for consumers at affordable prices.

The June 2013 CAP Reform is focused on the following priorities :

1. Viable food production
2. Sustainable management of natural resources
3. Balanced development of rural areas throughout the E.U.

Some facts and figures

- ✓ Over 77% of the E.U. is classified as rural (47% farmland, 30% forest)
- ✓ There are over 12 million full-time farmers in the E.U. (E.U. population 500 million).
- ✓ E.U. has 12 million farmers, with an average farm size of 15 ha.
- ✓ The U.S. has 2 million farmers, with an average farm size of 180 ha (U.S. population 315 million).
- ✓ The CAP budget for 2014-2020 for all 28 member states totals €95 billion.

How is the CAP budget used?

1. Income support for farmers (70% of CAP budget)

Under the June 2013 reform, 30% of direct payments will be linked to farmers' compliance with sustainable agricultural practice which is beneficial to soil quality, biodiversity and the environment (crop diversification, permanent grassland maintenance).

2. Market support measures (10% of CAP budget)

e.g. adverse weather conditions

3. Rural development measures (20% of CAP budget)

Direct payments provide farmers with a steady income and reward them for providing environmental benefits, which are in the public interest.

The “Greening” of 30% of direct payments will be linked to three environmentally friendly farming practices :

1. Crop diversification
2. Maintaining permanent grassland
3. Conserving 5% - 7% of areas of ecological interest from 2018.

Agri-environmental measures will be stepped up to meet higher environmental protection targets.