



EAT Stockholm Food Forum 2018

Background Paper

Leveraging Healthy and Sustainable Diets Through Agricultural Policy Reform

DISRUPTIVE DIALOGUE CO-ORGANIZED BY EAT, EUROPEAN PUBLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE (EPHA) & EATING BETTER

A transition toward sustainable and healthy diets is essential for the health of people and the planet, but there is a major gap between where we are now and where we should be. There is still need for a good answer to how agricultural policy can help leverage this transition. The question is particularly pertinent in Europe given the ongoing reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the new policy framework that will be needed in the UK after it leaves the EU.

This disruptive dialogue will explore ways that a ‘results-oriented’ agricultural policy could help foster healthy and sustainable diets. It will provide space to discuss several strategic questions, including: Which parts of the sustainable and healthy diet concept can be reasonably pursued through agricultural policy incentives? What types of objectives, performance indicators and instruments would such policy need? How could a modernized agricultural policy leverage a transition toward a more integrated and coherent policy approach to the food system?

The first part of the dialogue seeks to build a shared understanding of the interrelations between the concept of ‘sustainable and healthy diet’ and agricultural policy. The idea of a sustainable and healthy diet tends to be well-understood on a general level but becomes more complex when looking at the details. A further conceptual hurdle is how sustainable and healthy diets may relate to agriculture and agricultural policy-making. It is therefore critical to first explore and debate which elements of the sustainable and healthy diets concept can realistically be pursued within the context of agricultural policy.

It is widely recognized that animal products and animal farming are the central and most controversial factors in the sustainable and healthy diets concept. The session will therefore particularly focus on the question of a “less and better” approach to meat and dairy in high-consuming regions and what type of agricultural policy could help in pursuing this.

The second part of the dialogue will move from considering principles to more concrete thinking about ways to update agricultural policy mechanisms to enable an effective pursuit of sustainable and healthy diet objectives. This part will open with an outline of a new approach to a performance-oriented agricultural policy based on objectives, targets and monitoring systems. A similar approach is, in principle, to be pursued in the framework of the ongoing CAP reform, for which a proposal should have been published at the time of the forum.



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This part will reflect on the opportunities, difficulties and risks involved with such an approach and explore other ways to build new agricultural policy. Taking into account several concrete examples of objectives and policy mechanisms, the session will address how agricultural policy can evolve to align with a wider, more comprehensive and consistent policy framework pursuing sustainability and health objectives.

The desired outcome is a clearer common understanding of the directions agricultural policy can evolve in to allow the pursuit of sustainable and healthy diet objectives, and to take away some concrete objectives and policy mechanisms that it could integrate.

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