Spain defends the need to know budgets before reforming the CAP

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Luis Planas, attended the Council of Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries of the European Union, which has continued discussions on the reform package of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020, regarding the regulations on strategic plans, on the common organization of markets for agricultural products and the horizontal regulation.

Speaking at the entrance of the Council, Luis Planas has indicated that **the elaboration of the regulations should not be concluded before knowing the figures of the budget** with which the farmers, ranchers and the rural environment are going to count. The minister also considers it important to maintain the unity of the three regulations, so that any agreement must be global, on the whole of the legislative package.

Also, the minister has emphasized the need to maintain common elements in the new CAP, which **ensure equal conditions between farmers and ranchers in different Member States.** Thus, Spain believes that, on the common elements proposed by the European Commission (EC), it is necessary to incorporate some additional elements to maintain the common character of this policy.

Another aspect highlighted by the minister is the importance of efficient irrigation, consistent with the fight against climate change and environmental preservation. As noted, 50% of the 3,750,000 hectares of irrigated land in Spain has localized irrigation. "We are, together with Israel, the most advanced country in the world in terms of techniques related to controlled and efficient irrigation", to promote an innovative, sustainable and intelligent agriculture.

Olive oil

On the other hand, Planas has analyzed with the European Commissioner of the branch, Phil Hogan, the "strange" evolution of the prices of olive oil. As he stressed, the Ministry is closely monitoring this development, although prices are not yet in the reference thresholds to trigger private storage.

Sustainable bioeconomy

The Council discussed the new Strategy of the European Union for the development of a sustainable bioeconomy and circulate at the service of society, the environment and the community economy.

This strategy, which was presented by the European Commission last October, includes actions in different areas such as food security, the sustainable use of natural resources, the reduction of dependence on non-renewable resources, the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, the strengthening of competitiveness and the creation of employment.

The decision of the Technical Chamber of Resources of the European Patent Office regarding the possibility of patenting the results of classical techniques of plant improvement has also been addressed at the Board meeting.

Bilateral Spain-Poland

Luis Planas has held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland, Jan Krysztof Ardanowski, with whom he has addressed the reform of the CAP, **African swine fever (ASF)** or the situation of the sugar market.

Both ministers have exchanged views on the different aspects of the future CAP, such as the need to have a strong budget, improvements in market measures or their contribution to the social and economic development of rural territories.

Spain shares with Poland a great concern about the situation of the PPA in the European Union and its economic consequences. The Ministry has implemented enhanced surveillance, biosecurity and information measures to reduce the risk of cases arising in Spain.

In this context, Planas congratulated the Polish Government for having managed to control the spread of the disease to new territories during the last year, its presence in this country being limited to the border area with Belarus, Ukraine and Russia (Kaliningrad).

The minister has shown his support to Poland in the control of this disease and has pointed out the need for the countries affected by this disease to have financial tools and support to face this problem and eradicate it.

In particular, Spain supports the measures of control and reduction of wild boars that have already been adopted by the Polish authorities The minister has pointed out that a European-level strategy is necessary for the control of wild boar populations, given its importance in epidemiology of the illness. It also considers essential the collaboration of all Member States in the control of illegal movements of wild boars, to prevent the spread of the disease.

On the other hand, both ministers have addressed the situation of the sugar market, subject to high price volatility. Both Spain and Poland are in favor of keeping the aid coupled to the sugar beet producers in the post-2020 CAP, as a tool to avoid the disappearance of this important crop for certain regions at risk of depopulation.