Tejerina announces the celebration in Madrid of a conference on the CAP, which will be attended by Phil Hogan

During the opening ceremony of the 5th edition of the "Agraria" fair in Valladolid, on February 8th, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Environment, Isabel García Tejerina, announced the celebration in Madrid on 27th and 28th March, a conference on the CAP, which will be attended by EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan. In that line, García Tejerina has assured that the Government is already working to "achieve a strong CAP, well endowed economically and adapted to our needs".

> As the Minister pointed out, one of the main objectives of the Government is to achieve a solid national position in the defense of the Common Agricultural Policy from 2021

In that sense, García Tejerina said that one of the priorities of this Government is to defend the

interests of farmers in Brussels and recalled how, in 2012, great efforts were made in the negotiations of the reform of the CAP to ensure to farmers an important level of income. *Specifically, the CAP meant more than 7.3 billion euros in support for farmers in Castilla y León until 2020.*

Discussions on the reform of the future CAP, to be held at the Caixa Forum in Madrid, will also include other personalities *such as the Vice-President of the* European Parliament*'s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, Clara Aguilera*. For the Minister, this is a first meeting point for the debate, with the aim of Spain presenting a clear position to defend the CAP, identifying the role of Spanish agriculture in Europe in the year 2020, taking into account the territorial, sectoral and sustainability perspectives that assure and strengthen the competitiveness of the agri-food system.

The presentation of the consultation launched by the Commission last February 2nd *marks the formal beginning of what will be the debate on the reform of the CAP.*

> With the days on the CAP, the Ministry intends to collect all the possible contributions with a view to concretizing the initial position of Spain, which would be presented to the Sectoral Conference on Agriculture and Rural Development

A position with the greatest possible degree of consensus will be sought in order to influence and include this agreement in the Communication which the Commission is expected to submit in November of this year.

To this event will also be invited the Agriculture Councilors of the Autonomous Communities, parliamentarians of the Committees of Agriculture of the European Parliament and the Spanish Congress and Senate and the main representatives of the agricultural, forestry and environmental sector. *Also participating will be those responsible for the agricultural policy of neighboring countries like France and Portugal.*

> García Tejerina has pointed out that the first message that the Government wants to transfer to Europe is that the CAP should remain a very important factor in the stability of farmers' incomes

On the other hand, the minister has pointed out that climate change will be very present in the Common Agricultural Policy of the future. For this reason, the Government will work to make the contribution of agriculture to the fight against climate change for Spain a factor of competitiveness. She also took advantage of her speech at the inauguration of the Valladolid Machinery Fair *to emphasize the value of this exhibition to bring to farmers the latest innovations in agricultural machinery that contribute to a more efficient, productive and sustainable agricultural activity.*

Towards a further development of the beet sector

Regarding the finalization of the quota system for the sugar beet sector, García Tejerina explained that Spain is a net importing country of sugar (Spain consumes 1.5 million tonnes of sugar but can only produce half a million tonnes as a result of the quota system) *and now that the sector is liberalized, Spain has the possibility of replacing that imported sugar with sugar produced in our country.*

> The minister believes that we must all work to achieve greater development of the beet sector in Spain

In this context, García Tejerina has put in value the work of the sugar companies and professional agricultural organizations that during these years have continued to improve the productivity of beet. *Therefore, the objective is to take advantage of the end of the quota system to replace imported sugar for domestically produced sugar, in addition to continuing to work on the competitiveness of the sugar beet sector, where Castile and Leon is an example worldwide.*

Source: MAPAMA

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