

Agriculture on a human scale and respectful of biodiversity must be maintained and developed.

The rules that apply in the fields of agriculture and the environment are largely inspired by directives and regulations stemming from European policy. The financing of agricultural policy is one of the pillars of the construction of the European Union. It was largely inspired by France, of which it was for a long time the main beneficiary. The CAP has evolved over time, notably to adapt to international trade.

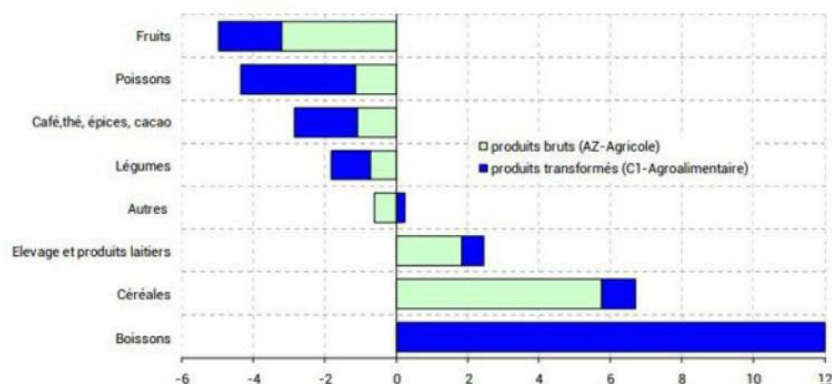
The objectives of the agricultural policy specified in Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome signed in 1957 are and remain :

- (a) to increase the productivity of agriculture by promoting technical progress, by ensuring the rational development of agricultural production and the optimum use of the factors of production, in particular labor;
- b) to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural population, in particular by increasing the individual income of those working in agriculture ;
- c) to stabilize the markets ;
- d) to guarantee the security of supplies ;
- e) to ensure reasonable prices in deliveries to consumers.

These objectives need to be recontextualized. At the time, the reconstruction of the country and of Europe was the priority. But are they still relevant today?

-Progress in the field of agriculture is undeniable in terms of production and technicality. In the aftermath of the war, France produced only half of the wheat it consumed. It had just over 40 million inhabitants. Today, with a population that has grown by more than 50%, our production exceeds our consumption by about 20%. So considerable efforts have indeed been made. But for a long time now, scientists have been demonstrating the limits of the intensive production system, particularly with regard to human health and the environment. Food self-sufficiency is not a given, especially for the production of fruits, vegetables, fish ... not to mention our energy dependence in the intensive agricultural model.

1. SOLDE COMMERCIAL PAR TYPE DE PRODUITS, EN 2018 (EN MILLIARDS D'EUROS)



Source : DGDDI

-Of course, a farmer's income in the 1950s was often very modest. But 70 years later the average farmer's income is far below what it should be. It's a little above the minimum wage for a very high number of hours worked. Wage inequality within the profession is high. Their salary does not come essentially from the sale of their production but is made up of a large share of subsidies. The system is therefore very fragile.

As for the market stability advocated at the time, world trade rules encouraged very significant speculation on basic foodstuffs, destabilizing the profession and leading to large-scale famines in the world.

-Finally, the prices of agricultural commodities are not sufficiently remunerative for the producer. On the consumer side, the prices for quality and locally produced products often remain unaffordable for many French people.

While some initial objectives were achieved, negative effects were induced in the production system.

From a policy of agricultural price support that contributed to overproduction, the Common Agricultural Policy then favored a system of direct aid linked to the area that led to the concentration of farms. This concentration was a godsend for the agricultural machinery industry, which indirectly benefited from the CAP system. The farms specialized in crops to the detriment of diversification. The impact on the environment is not neutral since it has been demonstrated the interest of crop rotations to reduce the use of pesticides. The current health crisis showed at the beginning of the year the fragility of our supplies.

From nearly 750,000 farmers in 2000, they now represent barely 450,000, a drop of 40% in barely a generation. The planning and development of our rural areas requires maintaining and developing the agricultural profession in quality sectors by limiting the often numerous intermediaries who monopolize a significant part of the margin of agricultural production.

It is therefore time to review the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy and to redirect aid to limit concentration and promote family farming. These orientations depend on the rules of the European Union but also on those that France decides to put in place to apply European directives. Each Member State therefore has room for maneuver to set up and develop agriculture that respects the environment and is on a human scale.

The climate change that has been observed for several years now makes it necessary to adapt our farming methods and crops. Yet the system continues to encourage water-intensive crops in regions with increasingly dry summers. The system still largely accompanies drainage and irrigation works. Grasslands are disappearing in favor of intensive crops. Crops often intended for industry (manufacture of starch, biofuels...) or for animal feed for stabling farms. Intensive crops degrade soil quality and destroy biodiversity...

Here again, it is not a question of destroying the high-performance and export-oriented food industry. But it must integrate environmental protection and animal welfare in a systematic way. It must be a player to support local agriculture rather than encouraging its disappearance. It is necessary to redirect aid to support this quality production, to enhance the value of local production, which creates well-paid jobs and respects the environment. It is necessary to rebalance our modes of production. Local agriculture and industry have their place in a society of 66 million inhabitants. Industry must not stifle the family farm.

Finally, international trade agreements must not destabilize local production chains with the import of products that do not meet the same quality standards in terms of health, social and environmental standards. Reciprocally, our surpluses must not flood markets and destabilize local production chains in developing countries. A new model of cooperation must be proposed.