

## Interbranch Online Meeting

**Date and time:** 29 October 2020, 10:30 – 13:00 CET

**Participants:** Nazario Battelli (Ortofrutta Italia); Laurent Grandin. Daniel Soares (Interfel); José Antonio García (Ailimpo); Wim Rodenburg (Brancheorganisatie G&F Nederland/FPC); Philippe Binard, Gil Kaufman (Freshfel Europe)

### 1) Opening remarks and background to the set-up of the Interbranch committee in Freshfel Europe

- Approval of the agenda and information about the timing and the meeting with Commission representatives
- No further remarks on minutes of the last meeting. The secretariat will also provide the minutes for this meeting

### 2) Feedback of actions on CAP reform and request of amendment to seek more support for IBO's

- Summary by the secretariat in the actions undertaken at the European level towards the Parliament (all COMAGRI MEP), Council ( German Presidency) and Commission ( DG AGRI)
- Report by Members of the actions at the national level in ES, FR; IT and NL on the proposed Art 48
  - France: Support the Art 48 to French MEP with emphasis on IBO's role in improving market knowledge
  - Spain: Not enough time to analyse the situation with national authorities. The main issue for IBO's is visibility – some MEPs are even not aware of IBO's. The silver lining is that national authorities are available to explore the role of IBO's. Need to consider the supply chain as a whole in order to reform the CAP. PO's and IBO's could work on similar issues but have different outreach
  - Italy: Wrote to the Ministry of Agriculture and several MEP's
  - The Netherlands: Situation in the Netherlands is focused on the supply chain. Meeting with AREFLH before the vote, in which the prominence of PO's in the sectors transpired. Split vote at Parliament level from different groups and consequently blocked the amendments (1107 and 1164)
  - While not successful in the incorporation of a new article 48, the lobbying activities were beneficial to raise the profile of IBO's which could also take benefit of some other improvements for the fruit and veg sector in the CAP reform

### 3) Preparation of the meeting with DG AGRI

- IBO's should not be seen exclusively as a tool to organize the production but also as a tool for the supply chain, and for their function IBO's should be eligible for financial assistance for their collective actions, without endangering the budget for Producers Organization
- Highlight to the Commission services the benefit of having a platform for IBO's at EU level
- Visibility of IBO's is still marginal, including on DG AGRI website with limited reference to IBO's
- There is a different understanding of the role of interbranch and on level of organization of the chain needed. The upcoming Farm to Fork debate should further reinforce the role of IBO's and their actions should be eligible for fundings

#### 4) Meeting with DG AGRI

##### a) Perspective from Commission services

- Commission services welcome the opportunity of meeting with the representatives of the Freshfel Europe IBO's representatives and highlight the benefit of such a platform
- The CMO regulation clearly recognizes the role of IBO's, such as in the case of Art 122 of the CMO for crisis management. In the CAP, the priority is to support farmers in the supply chain. The upcoming Farm to Fork strategy will lead to a need to reinforce the cooperation between farmers and the improve the good functioning of the supply chain, a process which could imply more responsibility for IBO's
- It is reminded that within the current regulatory environment, IBO's already have access to multiple financial resources for promotion, research and innovations. Besides, PO's can also include their financial contribution in the IBO's action among the activities of their operational programme
- Commission services welcome also more visibility for IBO's. The Commission organized in 2016 and 2017 a report followed by a conference on IBO's. As the system works well for the moment, there is no need to call another conference
- In regard to Farm to Fork, sustainability will become more and more important with a role for IBO's as well as for labelling, packaging, etc. In regard to sustainability, DG Competition is opening up to 20 November a consultation on links between sustainability and competition law. Freshfel should keep DG AGRI of its view and response to DG COMP

##### b) Perspective from Members

- How can the Commission assists in the discussion at the national level in regard to standard contract? In this regard, the Commission has a very limited impact on Member States as it does not have all the parameters to assess the situation ( extension of rules, contracts, etc.)
- Vertical IBO's can undertake multiples actions including promotion, research and innovation and international developments. Despite a broad potential spectrum of action, IBO's remain the forgotten tools in the CAP, and not catching the visibility it deserves. Resources are needed to be uòre proactive
- IBO's with collective actions will in no way interfere or undermine the activities and role of PO's
- The Commission should be aware of the latest trends in regard to promotion policy with less programme recently approved for fruit and vegetables. This is regrettable given the Farm to Fork objective of a sustainable and healthy diet as well as the international year of fruit and vegetables
- The supply chain is providing value and therefore the role of the segments in the chain should not be disregarded to improve the value of production and return on growers
- IBO's should focus on economic factors and not on the political side of the business, emphasizing the supply chain efficiency and productiveness and prevent market crises  
In many countries, PO's only represent a small part of the production, hence the relevance of IBO's to act as an umbrella for the supply chain
- The outcome of AWP 2020 showed very low acceptance rate for F&V as dairy and meat programmes took almost 60% of accepted programmes. In addition, €20mIn out of €80mIn were not used for multi and could've been transferred to single programmes. Moreover, disproportionate attention is dedicated to organic and PGI products, when the main difficulty is the consumption overall. More policy is needed to secure the promotion of fresh produce under EU policy

**5) Flyers and visibility of IBO's**

- Presentation by the secretariat of a draft flyer describing the role of IBO's at EU level, the legal background, the scope of activities, and the review of recognized IBO's at EU level for fruit and vegetables
- Members gave a first opinion on the flyers
- Secretariat reminds the members the need to urgently provide a short review of their activities as it could be showcased in the flyer. Information is requested within the next week so that the brochure can be finalized

*Next meeting to take place on 3 December 2020 at 10:30 CET*

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