

BASF – Position Paper on Marketing Standards

The Farm to Fork Strategy envisages a revision of marketing standards to provide for the uptake and supply of sustainable agricultural products. According to the recent 'Evaluation of Marketing Standards', current legislation on EU marketing standards has been effective in establishing a standardised and satisfactory quality of agricultural products, while also being useful for stakeholders. The proposed revision of EU marketing standards for agricultural products will explore the possibilities of adjusting existing standards or adding new ones where they may be desirable but are currently lacking, to take into account sustainability considerations.

BASF welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the effectiveness of marketing standards for agricultural products and the scope of its future framework. Supporting the common political objective of making production of agricultural products in the EU more sustainable, we would like to communicate the following three key messages on the future application of marketing standards:

1. The existing marketing standards framework is fit for purpose, ensuring high quality of agricultural products through clear guidelines.
2. Within the scope of its 9 strategic objectives, the future CAP already establishes sustainable farming practices as the baseline for agricultural production in the EU. BASF's solutions are compatible with this baseline, and their uptake can be incentivized through GAECs and eco-schemes.
3. If the EU would like to further support sustainability and production systems within the scope of EU marketing standards, we recommend this be done via promotion of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is and will be the cornerstone of the Sustainable Use Directive of Pesticides
4. Marketing standards should be based on use of sound science-based and non-discriminatory criteria, irrespective of the type of farming employed.

This position reflects our conviction that the existing regulatory environment for marketing standards is fit for purpose to ensure food quality in the EU. Marketing standards are regulated under the CMO Regulation, which establishes rules for managing agricultural markets, for example through technical governance, public intervention rules, and sectorial monitoring. As it stands, the management of agricultural markets is already complex and should not be further complicated by including sustainability provisions, which are already regulated in the broader CAP framework, the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD) and the Farm to Fork Strategy's objectives.

The future CAP, the revised SUD and Farm to Fork Strategy inherently serve as the principal policy initiatives to transition EU agriculture towards a more sustainable food system. Adding additional marketing standards in support of the same objective would increase both complexity and need for controls, particularly if measures under marketing standards differ from those which are already addressed by other policies.

The CAP's new emphasis on sustainable farming practices and its 9 strategic objectives ensure that agricultural products are more sustainable. Among others, to implement more

ambitious sustainability objectives in practice, the CAP Strategic Plans will manifest member states' contribution to reaching these strategic objectives, for example through Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) and eco-schemes.

In this context BASF would like to highlight how our technological solutions contribute towards sustainable food production.

Economic dimension

- BASF's solutions continue to secure crop yields and benefit farmers' incomes, which improves their position in the agri-food value chain, and supports competitiveness of EU agriculture and the development of vibrant rural areas;
- Crop innovation and protection, digital farming, IPM, and pest control contribute to the competitiveness of agricultural production.

a) Environmental dimension

- Innovation in plant sciences reduces impact of agriculture on climate change, reduces land use, and improves nutrient management in the soil;
- Novel Breeding Techniques (NBTs) can improve crop resilience and reduce reliance on inputs such as fertilisers and plant protection products;
- Precision agriculture and digital farming solutions ensure more targeted application of plant protection products, reducing both environmental impact and energy consumption, while reducing costs of production.

b) Social dimension

- BASF's technological and innovative solutions help to increase food quality, safety and ensure resilience of the food supply chain to accommodate consumer demands;
- Pest control benefits both plant and public health.

Sustainable agricultural products complement marketing standards on food quality. Through technological innovation and continuous improvement, BASF provides solutions for practical implementation of the CAP's strategic objectives and enables placement of more sustainable products on the market.

Policy recommendations

- ✓ Marketing standards are fit for purpose, and the existing general framework should be retained in the CMO Regulation.
- ✓ The role of IPM to ensure sustainability of agriculture production is essential and could be better recognized and supported through marketing standards.
- ✓ The broader CAP framework could better recognize the contribution of NBTs, digital farming, and precision agriculture to sustainable agricultural production.