

by Greet Goverde, www.aardeboerconsument.nl.

I am not including mails I sent and got back because they are in Dutch.

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I first approached one MEP individually
Bastiaan **BELDER** - Europe of freedom and democracy Group
(Member of a small protestant party in the Netherlands)

I mailed him on 25 January.

I mailed the 5 assistants on his website on 26 January.

I rang three times the next week: the phone was not answered, there was no answering machine.

By that time I got worried and I mailed the office of the SGP party in the Netherlands:

Was there anything wrong in Brussels?

They mailed back, saying they had forwarded my mail to Mr Belder.

Nothing back.

I gave up.

Then today, 15 Feb., 3 weeks after my first mail, I got a mail from Mr Belder saying 'we will take account of your viewpoints when considering our responses in the plenary vote.'

Telephone Conversation between Greet Goverde and
Gerben-Jan **GERBRANDY** MEP

He is disappointed by the 'conservative' voting by the member states and by COMAGRI.
(5 of the main players there are farmers themselves - this is wrong, they fight for their own subsidies.
'It is going to be a status quo, not directed at the future. No further liberalisation / greening.'

*I brought up **farmers' incomes** - would they be served by further liberalisation?*

His view, supported by agricultural bureau Alterra in the Netherlands:

- there should be a zone for (sustainable) export-oriented agriculture
- a smaller zone for agriculture in High Nature Value areas, which might be subsidised. Closed nutrients cycle, protein seeds etc.
- an in-between zone.

But still, farmers' incomes, even in export-oriented areas?

Yes, farmers' incomes are too low. He asked: 'why can't they get better prices from their own cooperatives?'

I was able to enlighten him on 'their' cooperatives, which are just processing factories at the mercy of retail. They tell the farmers about the prices retail wants to pay and then it's just 'take it or leave it'.

I brought up the Canadian model: talks between processors, retail and producers (farmers) presided over by the government: result: the Canadian farmers get 54% of the supermarket price instead of between 20 and 30% here.

He said he was going to look into that on our site.

Capping; *I brought up the French proposal: give the first 50 ha. more EU money than the following hectares*

Gerbrandy: when it comes from France I tend not even to listen.

Greet: *well, it's not bad this time. I explained.* He was going to pay attention to that.

Export subsidies: We agreed that they should be abolished, but I pointed out that our farmers on this point also say: okay, BUT they also affect our incomes: less exports is less income. But that could be remedied with a less 'liberalised' policy, see the article on the ARC website.

I also brought up that after the free trade agreement with Latin America the farmers' incomes on the high area around Bogotá are already going down: the farmers can't sell the milk of their 4 or 5 cows any more now that there's EU milk powder coming in unhindered.

Greening

7% rule: he agreed that that is more difficult for Dutch farmers than for farmers in e.g. France who have more 'nature' areas on their farms anyway. For Dutch farmers it means 7% less income.

He has always pleaded for more diversified measures because not all EU farmers farm in the same circumstances. I brought forward the proposal of our arable farmers: raise the organic level in the soy on all farms in the EU. But that is not 'on the table'.

TO BE CONTINUED