

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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### **Cypriot Presidency Priorities for the Agriculture Sector**

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Agriculture in the News

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**Report Highlights:**

On July 1, 2012 Cyprus took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This report provides an overview of the key issues on the EU agenda of interest to U.S. agriculture stakeholders.

## **General Information**

### **CYPRriot PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

On July 1, 2012, Cyprus took over, for the first time since it joined the EU in 2004, the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union. To achieve its main objective, “Working towards a Better Europe”, the Cypriot Presidency has set four key priorities:

1. Europe, more efficient and sustainable;
2. Europe, with a better performing and growth-based economy;
3. Europe, more relevant to its citizens, with solidarity and social cohesion;
4. Europe in the world, closer to its neighbors.

The Presidency’s six-month Work Program - by policy area – is available on the Cypriot Presidency’s website at <http://www.cy2012.eu/en/Footer/the-cyprus-presidency/programme-and-priorities>. This report provides an overview of the key issues on the EU agenda of interest to U.S. agriculture stakeholders.

### **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2014-2020**

The negotiations on the MFF will be the main priority for the Cyprus Presidency. At the EU summit in June 2012, European leaders decided that an agreement on the MFF should be reached by the end of 2012. Before the summit, the Cypriot Presidency said it hoped to achieve a “political agreement” on the MFF and leave the final work to the Irish Presidency, which begins on January 1, 2013. The MFF is the long-term EU budget framework that translates the political priorities of the EU into financial terms. Annual budgets must comply with the MFF. The Commission proposed to raise the next seven-year budget ceiling to Euro 1.025 trillion, an increase of 4.8% from the current Euro 976 billion. The MFF will be on the agenda of the General Affairs Council meeting on July 24, 2012, and an informal meeting of the Ministers for European Affairs on August 30, 2012, will be entirely devoted to the MFF negotiations.

### **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) & Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)**

In parallel with the negotiations on the MFF, the Cypriot Presidency will aim to progress negotiations on the reform of the CAP and the CFP. One of the core objectives is to simplify both policies taking into account Member States’ specificities and needs. A pre-requisite for concluding CAP reform negotiations will be the agreement of the CAP budget within the framework of the MFF. Even with the MFF agreement under the Cypriot Presidency, the lack of real progress achieved so far on the reform of the CAP coupled with Cyprus’ relative inexperience in EU affairs makes it highly likely that CAP reform negotiations will be concluded during the Irish Presidency.

## **Quality Schemes**

The “Quality Package” proposal to revise the rules on geographical designations and marketing standards may be adopted under the Cypriot Presidency. The Presidency also intends to complete the outstanding work on the revision of the Organic Farming Regulation.

## **Food Safety**

The Cypriot Presidency will start the examination, upon submission by the Commission, of the package proposal for the new Animal Health Law, the Revision of the Official Controls, the new Plant Health Regime, and the new Marketing of Seeds and Propagating Materials Regulation. The Presidency will also initiate work on the revision of the Hygiene Package.

## **Environment**

The Cypriot Presidency will focus on sustainable development and the follow-up on the Rio+20 Summit. It will also work towards an agreement on the proposal to revise the current requirements for greenhouse gases monitoring, by reflecting the experience so far and including additional obligations. In addition, the Presidency will aim for a political agreement on the inclusion of land use, land use change and forestry related emissions and removals in the 20 percent reduction commitments by 2020. Mainstreaming adaptation to climate change in other policies will be given emphasis by the Cypriot Presidency. In this respect, the Presidency will hold an exchange of views on the financing of adaptation measures.