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New Minister of Agriculture and His Priorities

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Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

Jakub Sebesta was appointed new Minister of Agriculture on May 8, 2009. Sebesta is a specialist in agriculture, from a non political background. He has worked over three decades for the Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority. The Czech Republic with its term leading the EU Presidency quickly ending June 30, has a new leader for its agricultural issues. Departing Minister Petr Gandalovic's aides and EU Presidency leadership team remains in place, working with Minister Sebesta.

General Information:

Author Defined:

On May 8, 2009, Jakub Sebesta was appointed new Minister of Agriculture for the Czech

Republic. His predecessor Petr Gandalovic left his position after the fall of the Czech government that followed a no-confidence vote that took place in March 2009.

Jakub Sebesta. studied at the University of Agriculture in Brno (now called Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry) and started his professional career as Head of the Viniculture Unit at the Agricultural Cooperative in his home town Krumvir. In 1976 Sebesta joined the State Quality Inspection Authority (now the Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority - CAFIA), working as a sampling technician. Minister Sebesta cares about food quality.

In 1981, Sebesta became the Wine control inspector for the Czech Republic and nine years later he moved into the position of the Director of the Regional Inspectorate of CAFIA in Brno. Since 1992, until his Ministerial appointment he had been the Director General of the Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority (CAFIA).

Jakub Sebesta has never been a member of any political party. He is a member of many prestigious professional associations: Executive and Scientific Board of the Mendel University, Scientific Board of the University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Supervisory Board of the Veterinary Research Institute, Supervisory Board of the Wine Fund of the CR, and the VINEXPO Association.

With his background, Jakub Sebesta is expected to be an expert Minister with a pragmatic and scientifically based approach. So far he's been center-oriented and his non-partisan background gives him a great opportunity to stay more politically neutral than his predecessor..

Two main priorities of the new Minister of Agriculture for the upcoming months are to successfully conclude the priorities set for Czech EU Council Presidency and on the national level design a realistic budget for Czech agriculture from the national government in 2010.

His main focus now is on preparation of a successful Informal Ag Ministerial Meeting that will take place on May 31 - June 2 in Brno. He will promote the Ministerial at the upcoming Ministerial Council in Brussels, emphasizing an importance of contributing to the dialog continuity. The main topic of the Informal Ministerial in Brno will be a debate on future form of direct payments for farmers after 2013.

Regarding the national-level priority of the Czech agricultural budget preparation, Sebesta would like to in the new budget eliminate as much as possible impact of the financial crises on farmers.