

COVID-19: Helping farmers secure supply of food for all

- cross-border movement of feed and plant protection products for agriculture
- maximum flexibility to EU states to alleviate impact of pandemic
- urgent measures to support the market and fight speculations

EU needs further measures to ensure continuous supply of food for citizens and support farmers' efforts to this end, Agriculture Committee Chair said Monday.

In two separate letters, addressed yesterday to the EU's Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski and to Croatia's Agriculture Minister Marija Vučković (currently Chair of the EU Council of agriculture ministers), the Chair of the EP's Agriculture Committee Norbert Lins (EPP, DE) welcomed actions taken by the Commission so far, which allow EU states [to give farmers more time to apply for subsidies](#) and help them further with [temporary state-aid measures](#). But he urgently called for further ones to avoid disruptions in food supplies.

“European farmers are not only struggling to continue their daily work but even more so, face ever increasing difficulties to access the means of production and to deliver their products to European consumers. This grave situation calls for urgent action,” Mr Lins stressed. “Our farmers who are on the front line to maintain the food supply to citizens across Europe, thus ensuring EU food security in these challenging times, are waiting for decisive and effective actions to alleviate the impact of this crisis,” he said.

Mr Lins welcomed the Commission's effort to maintain free movement of goods on the internal market but insisted this is not enough. “We call on the Commission to go one step further, not only allowing foodstuffs to pass borders via the “green lanes” but also allowing essential inputs, such as feed, fertilisers and plant protection products as well as ingredients and materials for the agro-industrial sector in order to allow them to continue providing their crucial goods to European consumers”, he said.

The EU Commission should prepare strategies that would “simplify [administrative] procedures as much as possible while granting maximum flexibility to Member States” and “support the most affected sectors” and fight market speculation, Mr Lins said. He also called on the EU's executive and member states to find ways to allow some sort of cross-border movement for seasonal workers during the harvest season, even if travel restrictions are still in place, to ensure that the produce can reach the market and food shortages are avoided.

Background

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the [EU Commission has allowed Member States](#) to offer an extension of one month for the deadline for farmers to submit their applications for direct payments and certain payments under rural development.

The [EU's executive also adopted](#) a [Temporary Framework](#) that allows EU states to use the full flexibility foreseen under EU State aid rules to support their economy. This should ensure that sufficient liquidity remains available to businesses of all types, including farms, and preserve the continuity of their economic activity during and after the COVID-19 outbreak.

Further information

> [Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development](#)

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