

# Processing in a farm and direct sales

## A chance for Bulgarian farmers

*Dr. Stoilko Apostolov,*

# The problem

- Bulgarian small farmers are in very unfavourable situation
- On one side they can not apply to different European programmes because of normative restrictions or because they do not will to do it
- On the other side they can not sell their own production – they can not reach the market
- The worst situation is for small farmers, breeding cows for milk

# The problem

- There are 117 796 farms, registered in Bulgaria, breeding cows for milk, divided into 3 groups, in accordance with requirements for milk quality and cow-sheds
- The first group includes 2403 farms, which suit all requirements
- The second group includes 882 farms, which do not suit for milk quality or building requirements
- In the last group are the rest 114 511 farms, (97 %), which do not suit any requirements

# The problem

- These 117 796 farms are not allow:
  - to apply for subsidies for milk
  - to apply for additional milk quota from the National reserve
- Dairies pay lower price for the milk from these farms
- These farms have a deadline to cover all requirements until 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2009, otherwise they will lose the milk quota
- Until now there is not any official information that any of these farms convert to first group

# The problem

- These 117 796 farms are not allow :
  - to apply for subsidies for milk
  - to apply for additional milk quota from the National reserve
- Dairies pay lower price for the milk from these farms
- These farms have a deadline to cover all requirements until 31st of December, 2009, otherwise they will lose the milk quota
- These farms have a deadline to cover all requirements until 31st of December, 2009, otherwise they will lose the milk quota

# The problem

- The problem is worst in the mountain and distant regions as Rhodope, Strandja and Western Old mountain
  - in these regions the dairies refuse to buy the milk even at lower price
  - farmers feel abandoned by the Government and they are negatively disposed towards the European Union
- These regions have a high nature value
- The existence of herbivorous animals in these regions is a very important premise for biodiversity preservation and keeping the traditional living of the local people

# What to do?

- Most of the existing farmers organizations see the problem solution only in a financial support by the Government
- In the beginning of the year few Bulgarian NGO were gather together and discussed the problem (Bioselena, Bulgarian society for birds protection, Bulgarian national consumer association, Slow food – Bulgaria)
- Based on our experiences and contacts with our partners from few European countries (mainly France, Italy, Hungary and Romania) we suggested a solution – allowing processing in the farms and direct sales

# Coalition “Pure food – fair living” – the beginning

- Changes in the National legislation – development of Regulation for direct sales
- Declaration and contacts with the Ministry of agriculture and food
- Publicity of the initiative – Publicis Consultants | MARC have engaged to organize a free public presentation of the coalition
- First official letter to the Minister of agriculture and food – 17.02.2009 (no answer until August)



# First press conference

- 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2009  
– BTA, Sofia
- 8 TVs, 3 of them National
- 2 National radios
- 3 informational agencies
- 4 newspapers, 3 magazines
- 26 web-sites published articles about the subject



# Coalition's initiatives

- 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 2009 – exhibition – testing products from farms – hotel Rila , Sofia
- 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2009 – lunch with products from farms
  - Mrs. Meglena Plugchieva – a Deputy Prime Minister
  - European ambassadors (England, France, Austria),
  - Chief editors of leading Bulgarian media
- 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2009 – Round table with experts from Slow Food – Italy, the Ministry of agriculture, Veterinarian control, media

# Exhibition of farm' products – Sofia

- 25th of April, 2009 – exhibition – testing products from farms – hotel Rila , Sofia
- 19th of May, 2009 – lunch with products from farms
  - Mrs. Meglena Plugchieva – a Deputy Prime Minister
  - European ambassadors (England, France, Austria),
  - Chief editors of leading Bulgarian media

# First signs of change – after parliamentary elections

- 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009 – a new letter addressed to the Minister of agriculture – Dr. Naydenov
- 19<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009 – convoke a working group to develop the Regulation for processing in the farm and direct sales
- 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 2009 – first meeting of the working group
- A positive attitude by the staff of the Ministry of agriculture and food
- All chances for success of this initiative look real

## **Coalition “Pure food - Fair living” members**

- **Bulgarian National Consumer Association (BNCA)**
- **Foundation for Organic Agriculture BIOSELNA**
- **Slow food Bulgaria**
- **Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB)**
- **WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme in Bulgaria**
- **Association “Bioproduct BG”**
- **Association of sheep-breeders from Western Balkan**
- **Association for breeding Bulgarian Rhodope cattle and Jersey**
- **Association for breeding indigenous breeds in Bulgaria**
- **Bulgarian society for preservation of biodiversity “Semperviva”**
- **Association “Mountain milk”**
- **Bulgarian veterinary union**

## **Coalition “Pure food - Fair living” – next steps**

- **Draft regulation – until 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2009**
- **Publishing new regulation–until 31<sup>st</sup>of December, 2009**
- **A lot of work to be done for training farmers, farm investments and help for direct sales of farm products**

“The food we eat has change more for the last 40 years, than for the last 40 000 years!”

Erik Shloser

**Our mission is to safe at least part of the traditional Bulgarian food-staffs and living of local people.**

Thank You for Your attention!

Dr. Stoilko Apostolov

Coalition “Pure food – Fair living”

Foundation Bioselena

[www.bioselena.com](http://www.bioselena.com)

