

Farm Animal Industrial Platform (FAIP)

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Dr. Philippe Busquin
Commissioner DG Research
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Oosterbeek, 29 November 2002

Dear Dr. Busquin,

The Farm Animal Industrial Platform (FAIP), a forum of European farm animal reproduction and selection organizations, welcomes the initiative of the European Council to increase research and technological development (R&D) investment in the EU with the aim of approaching 3 % of EU average Gross Domestic Product by 2010. With regard to the Communication "More research for Europe – towards 3 % of GDP" (COM(2002) 499 final) we would draw your attention to the following:

Public research base. A sound public research base is the basis of sound science-industry relations, especially in farm animal reproduction and selection where Small and Medium Enterprises are in the majority, and the research units in industry are small but vital for the future of the industry. Incentives should be directed towards cooperation between sectors, countries and between industry and science instead of towards competition. **European wide a strategy should be developed to maintain the public research base at a sufficient level.** For instance, public funding in animal reproduction is decreasing quickly and is heavily relying on industry funding at the moment. This knowledge is vital for good animal production and should be maintained at a sufficient number of universities and institutes to be a research base for innovative spin off. Furthermore, importantly, a sound research base is necessary to ensure that scientific knowledge is still available when (food) emergencies demand this.

Entrepreneurship through R&D. often refers to start-up companies. However, **small scale R&D firms and R&D units of 'traditional' industries that aim to integrate new knowledge (e.g. on biotechnology, IT) into their industries need as much attention and support.** Their role with regard to innovation is of strategic importance.

Intellectual property regulations. Next to good intellectual property regulations a good legal framework for the application of new technologies is important. Often the application of new technologies is hampered due to **contradictory legislation, different legislation in different member states and hampering export or import barriers**, also within Europe. FAIP is in favour of studies and working groups dealing with these issues, e.g. organic breeding in Europe and possible hampering measures at local, national and European level, or regulatory basis for animal cloning and import of cloned animals in Europe. In order to solve these undesirable implementation obstacles, improved coordination within and between departments and directorates is necessary. Furthermore, **public discussions involving scientists, industry, and socio-economic representatives** e.g. in projects like SEFABAR (QLG7-2000-01368) are important to finetune society wishes and industry/research possibilities.

Favourable fiscal conditions and incentives to stimulate private R&D. Governments can prevent that public R&D spending is crowded out by more productive private sector investment by ***stimulating joint public/private R&D initiatives.***

- Public financing for business R&D. Direct support measures and fiscal incentives for R&D are very important incentives to stimulate private R&D activities.
- European specialties. Europe distinguishes itself from other continents by its care for animal welfare, quality food, and biodiversity. Farm animal reproduction and selection, and also other animal food production related activities, face the challenge of finding intelligent, sustainable answers in ***combining new and accepted technologies while respecting European values and traditions.*** These sustainable answers demand extra research efforts, integration of knowledge from a wide range of research areas, and continuous finetuning with society. These research efforts can not be paid by the food producers alone. European governments and society bodies need to take their responsibility in this respect as well in funding extra research, and supporting new European initiatives in all possible ways.

Also, these areas can add to human health (in prevention of diseases and zoonoses) and to a sustainable environment (in improving animal diversity). They need to get a ***fair chance to integrate areas like genomics and sustainability.*** Therefore, farm animal projects in the Genomics and Sustainability themes of the 6th Framework Programme for RTD should not only be a theoretical possibility (i.e. worded in the aims) but also a real possibility (i.e. rewarded in the bullet points and in funded genomics and biodiversity New Instruments).

We believe that the proposed measures will add to a sound and strong innovation climate in accepted European food production.

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of the FAIP members,

Dr. J.W.M. Merks
Chairman

Mrs. A.M. Neeteson
Executive Secretary