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Proteins and Renewable Energy in Europe

Despite three decades of efforts, the European Union still suffers from a deficit in plant proteins: more than 30 million tonnes of soybean crops were imported during 2016-17. This figure comes with an analysis presented in "Proteins and Renewable energy – One and the same challenge". The review shows that two measures have had a significant impact in recent years:

The biofuels sector. Thanks to the co-generation of 13 million tons of protein-rich products per year, it is the largest "protein plant" in terms of its size and capacity to reduce substantially European dependence on soybean imports. The Protein Independence Indicator highlights that biofuels produced in the European Union have increased the level of EU independence from 18% to 34% over the period 1994-2014.

The greening of the 2013 CAP and in particular the measure authorizing nitrogen-fixing crops on Ecological Focus Areas doubled the volumes produced in Europe of field peas, broad beans and soy beans (+40%), this represents 2,3 million tons of protein rich products, "Made in EU".

These positive dynamics are challenged by recent initiatives already discussed or being currently negotiated by the European institutions. Under the REDII Directive, the EU proposed a "phasing out" of "first generation biofuels", without taking into account that biofuels contribute to 52% to the EU's protein independence. The protein production activity would not withstand a lower European ambition for biofuels. The positive dynamic has been stopped by the reduction of 2.2 million tons of colza production due to the competition of biofuels produced from palm oil since 2012-2013. It is urgent to build on the efforts made in recent years, not by destabilizing the European biofuel sector. Moreover, it is necessary to re-establish at European scale, a solid and coherent green architecture for the future CAP combining environmental and economic sustainability.

Source: Farm Europe

Read more:

<http://www.farm-europe.eu/news/proteins-and-renewable-energy-one-and-the-same-challenge/>