EUROPEAN FARMERS COORDINATION

PLATFORM

(December 1986)

OBJECTIVES OF THE EFC

In the face of present agricultural policies in Europe, of the CAP, to form a European farmers movement which:
- explains and denounces the consequences of these policies on the majority of farmers and consumers;
- will serve to put forth proposals for a new kind of agricultural policy in the service of farmers;
- will act together with other social forces in order to promote this new agricultural policy;
- will develop an exchange among member organisations for a better understanding of our countries, and develop international solidarity with other countries.

CONSEQUENCES OF PRESENT AGRICULTURAL POLICIES IN EUROPE

Throughout Europe, agriculture is faced with a crises which is characterised by underpayment of a majority of farmers, the increasing elimination of a great number of them, the growing impossibility of setting up, and the concentration and internationalisation of agricultural production.

1) Development models followed for about thirty years have geared agriculture towards a mode of production characterised by:
- An enormous accumulation of means of production requiring massive credits and subsidies leading to an increased dependance on banks, a presently unbearable debt, and growing difficulties in reactivating farms.
- Ongoing research on work productivity profits in the image of the industrial world, which often results in higher social and economic costs.

2) Such models have primarily benefitted the agro-food industries, banks, and a small percentage of farmers, all at the detriment of a vast majority of European farmers deprived of payment for their work.
3) We are witnessing a twofold phenomenon of production concentration:

- Concentration of production in areas benefitting from a supply of raw materials at low prices on the international market.
- Concentration of production in an increasingly small number of intensive and specialised farms.

4) The result is an ever widening gap between farmers and regions. Certain regions are more and more marginalised while others are becoming more and more fragile because of their specialisation.

5) Under the pressure of commercial interests, the European agricultural policy, contrary to its objectives, is being geared towards increased dependance and not self-sufficiency.

This is particularly true for energy and cattle feed.

The priority given to exports only hides the growing number of imports necessary for production.

6) At a time when fallow land is becoming commonplace in all European countries, Europe is cultivating over 10 million hectares abroad in order to feed its cattle. This is particularly done in certain third world countries, often to the detriment of the self-subsistence of their populations.

7) Production surpluses are a by-product of the production model itself and of the price system. Their purpose is to put pressure on prices.

8) Although the agricultural policy may allow consumers to benefit from relatively low buying prices, it forces them to refinance these products through the VAT which sustains the CAP, as well as the multiple social and environmental costs that arise from it.

9) The impact of the present agricultural model on the environment is brutal, fast, and will have consequences on generations to come. The quality of foodstuffs is degrading. Water-tables are more and more polluted and soil is ever poorer.

10) The responsibility of this situation is up to the lobbies which influence the agricultural policy (agro-food industries,
banks), together with the authorities and conventional agricultural organisations.

PROMOTING A DIFFERENT AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN EUROPE

OBJECTIVES

- Maintaining small farms and jobs in the agricultural sector,
- Fair payment for agricultural work, through the sale of products first of all,
- An active setting up policy,
- A balanced distribution of production among regions and producers, accompanied by a control potentially surplus productions,
- The recognition and promotion of different, more autonomous modes of production,
- Advocating priority use of all natural potential,
- The social recognition of all men and women working in agriculture and the obtention of social rights equivalent to those of other social categories,
- Striving for greater food autonomy in Europe.

PROPOSALS

1) A different price mechanism so as to guarantee payment for work: differentiated prices taking into consideration production conditions in each region; higher guaranteed prices applied to producers within the limits of a certain volume per asset.

2) Guaranteed prices should be for agricultural products and not processed products as is often the case in the CAP.

3) Controlling production:

- Guaranteed prices up to a certain volume per asset,
- Considerable and progressive reduction in imports of cattle feed,
- Development of lacking European fodder (proteinous in particular),
- Measures aimed at discouraging over intensification. Such measures would result in the reduction of surpluses.

4) An active setting up policy:

- Limiting debts,
- Better distribution of land use,
- Establishing leases for longer periods.