



# CONFEDERAÇÃO NACIONAL DA AGRICULTURA – CNA

Pessoa Colectiva de Utilidade Pública  
Filiada na Coordenadora Europeia – Via Campesina – Sede em Bruxelas

## OPEN LETTER FROM FAMILY FARMING ON THE SITUATION WE LIVE IN THE COUNTRY WITH THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK AND THE DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

**For specific measures to safeguard National Production, Food Security and Family Farming as guarantor of the population's food**

Mr. President of the Republic,

Mr. President of the Assembly of the Republic,

Mr. Prime Minister,

In view of the worrying situation that we are experiencing in Portugal, with the epidemic outbreak of Coronavirus, with the declaration of the “national state of emergency”, CNA – Confederação Nacional da Agricultura (National Confederation of Agriculture) considers it necessary to underline, in the first place, the fairness of the struggle of CNA and the small and medium scale farmers, from Family Farming, for the right to produce in defense of the Food Sovereignty of our country.

In this context, CNA hails the Portuguese Farmers who remain in the fields, determined to ensure immediate livestock and agricultural production and for the next campaign!

The Portuguese population is now subjected to restrictions on movement, work and social in general. CNA also hails the high level of civic behavior demonstrated by the population.

However, CNA draws the attention of Your Excellencies so that any restrictions on movements do not indiscriminately affect agricultural and food production, and reiterates the need for another policy that supports Family Farming and National Production with concrete and urgent measures.

Faced with increased difficulties, no one can deny the importance of increasing our food production, primarily for consumption by the population, thereby increasing our degree of self-supply. At the same time, is exposed the fallacy that successive governments have exaggerated around the objective of producing "for export", under the argument of the balance of the agri-food trade balance in value (in euros), a theory that is of interest above all to the big agri-business...

## **CNA demands to the Government and other Sovereign Bodies that Family Farming and the Farmers should not be sacrificed or forgotten even more!**

Excellencies:

In addition to the already "chronic" problems of lack of outlets and low Production Prices, Portuguese Farmers and Family Farming in particular are facing new problems with the current situation. Problems that need to be faced and tackled, a task that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government must first perform.

In fact, we reject any government action discriminating negatively the agricultural sector in relation to other socio-economic sectors, as seems to be happening in view of the recent announcement by the government of economic and financial support measures for the national economy.

### **CNA demands to the Government and other Sovereign Bodies, among other measures:**

- The enshrinement of the principle that, in order to guarantee national agri-food production, farming should not be penalised by the specific contingencies and consequences of the crisis. In this context, we are talking about the hypotheses to be enshrined: non-compliance with immediate deadlines for the implementation of agricultural projects; non-payment, within the usual time limits, of Social Security or Financial contributions or "debt service" payments to the banks or the State.
- The anticipation by the Ministry of Agriculture of payments of several of the public aids of the CAP, Common Agricultural Policy, as well as a simplification of the inherent processes.
- Concrete measures to avoid the financial collapse of Agricultural Associations and Producers' Organisations, in view of the suspension of regular activity and the respective drop in revenue. These Organizations, many of them providing support services to farmers, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, State, are today, more than ever, essential for the defense of Agriculture, Farmers, National Production and to ensure an accessible and good quality food.
- The maintenance in operation and even the temporary opening of food markets, ensuring the conditions of health control. The closure of Local Markets is creating problems in the disposal of small and medium scale farmers' production. In CNA's view, there is no major justification for closing food markets, particularly when large supermarkets continue to operate. Decentralised support systems, in particular financial ones, should be implemented for the creation of systems for the collection, distribution and sale of agri-food goods to be planned at local level (municipality and local councils), including 'internet platforms' for the sale/purchase of agri-food products.

We underline that the safety conditions in these spaces must be guaranteed and communicated to citizens, with regular hygiene plans, limitation of the number of people and establishment of strict operating procedures. These provisions also concern Local Authorities.

- The guarantee of disposal of the products also for meat producers selling mainly to the catering sector. In sheep and goats, meat or milk the situation could be even more serious as this time of year is vital for the survival of small and medium-sized farms, either by holding numerous specific fairs, e.g.

of sheep's cheese, or by selling for the Easter festivities. The Government should now consider the possibility that it may be necessary to create a measure of withdrawal of production by the State, from the installed capacity or mechanisms to be created, in order to avoid the loss of production and ensure the maintenance of productive activity.

- The simplification of procedures for issuing waybills with rules adapted to the situation we live in, in relation to the necessary movement of animals, in view of the limitation to the face-to-face service of Farmers.
- Consider as a priority the transport of food, in the event of an unavoidable limitation in the movement of people and goods, ensuring the collection of products from producers, a process in which milk collection is a good example. The transport of all goods and inputs necessary for agricultural and livestock activity should also be ensured.
- The movement of Farmers, especially the smallest, must always be ensured, and even facilitated by the authorities, whether for agricultural activity, for the purchase of inputs or for the sale of their Products, for example direct sale - on the farm, at home, on the local market - must continue to be allowed.
- Cautioning levels of input stocks and services vital to the operation of agricultural production - sale of fertilisers, feed and other products; sale and repair of agricultural equipment; veterinary services; warning and support services from the Ministry of Agriculture, etc. The Government needs to prioritise these and ensure that they remain in place.

#### **Other concrete support measures to deal with an exceptional situation.**

- Define and allocate public support to stimulate investment in the spring/summer campaign (that is starting) and maintenance of permanent crops. For Livestock, the purchase of Animal Feed and the disposal of production in the coming months should also be ensured.
- Reset "Green Electricity" - discount of (at least) 50% of the value of consumption in electric downloads for agri-food service.
- Moratoriums and reduction of tax and contribution obligations.
- Creation of a Credit Line for reducing Debt and for Investment, a highly subsidised and long-term (15 years) credit line for farmers, agricultural cooperatives and small food retailers.

#### **The Food Safety of the population calls for firm and very targeted measures!**

Today, society as a whole is better aware of what is essential and what "hurts" most in critical situations: health or lack of it and the necessary public health care, the right to healthy, nutritious and local food.

In this matter, CNA cannot fail to remind you that the dangerous agro-food dependence of our country and its population has been the consequence of the harmful policies applied for years by successive

governments and the European Union. In fact, and as already mentioned, during that same period, CNA has permanently pointed out the necessary alternative to this agro-food dependence. This alternative involves, above all, the defence of the Food Sovereignty of the Country, the increase of National Production and the enlargement of the network and the equipping of local markets.

)In the meantime, a real and concrete assessment of national production capacity and of our main agri-food needs is also urgently needed.

The closure of most part of catering, public markets and small businesses, and the difficulties imposed on direct sales, are leading to an exponential concentration of retail trade in supermarkets, which has created numerous difficulties in access to markets for small and medium scale farmers.

Food production can no longer be regarded as a mere international business at the expense of producers and consumers!

Portugal can count on the determination of small and medium scale farmers, Family Farming, who are the vast majority of farmers, to continue producing to feed our population.

Defend National Production and the Income of Portuguese Farmers!

Ensuring Healthy and Affordable Food for the Population!

Coimbra, 20th March 2020

CNA's Direction