



Carbon farming is another step towards the financialisation of agriculture and land speculation

European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) has strongly criticised the content of the communication on "Restoring Sustainable Carbon Cycles" published on Wednesday 15 December, which, if implemented, will set the European Commission on the path to cause even more climate and social damage.

It is clear that the Carbon Farming initiative will amplify the harmful processes that already exist. It goes against the systemic objectives announced in the Green Deal and in particular in the Farm to Fork Strategy. Whilst ECVC welcomes the GD and F2F objectives and recognises the potential to solve some of the limitations of the CAP, the implementation is insufficient. This initiative is about carbon sequestration, but there is no mention of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from industrial agriculture. Thus, the carbon market is a fake solution and will not succeed in combating climate change or the biodiversity crisis, nor support rural areas and fair access to healthy food.

In reality, this mechanism paves the way to an unprecedented financialisation of agriculture, where agricultural income would be dependent on a speculative carbon market, the volatility of which we have seen since 2005 with the European carbon market mechanism. The initiative allows large companies in the energy or IT sector, among others, to continue their polluting activities under the guise of being environmentally friendly. They are able to "compensate" their emissions by purchasing carbon credits related to land that is supposed to be used to grow food. In practice, this will increase the power of these large companies at the expense of peasant farmers.

"The role of European public policies is to guarantee the production of healthy food to feed the European population, through agriculture that respects the environment and creates jobs. To replace this role with a speculative market mechanism is simply irresponsible," says Morgan Ody, farmer from Brittany, France and member of the ECVC Coordination Committee.

Andoni Garcia, farmer in Basque Country and member of the Coordination Committee of ECVC also expressed his concerns. "The risk of speculation and land grabbing on agricultural land is already a problem recognised by the European institutions. The fact that CAP direct payments cause this risk is even investigated by the EU Joint Research Centre, and this year the European Court of Auditors will publish an audit on fraud and the CAP related to land grabbing. This phenomenon will be amplified by the measures announced in the "Sustainable Carbon Cycles" initiative: access to land will become increasingly difficult, especially for young people, and the depopulation of rural areas will continue".

We already know that the CAP is too weak to guarantee food production in Europe, and it is unfortunate that this failure is further reinforced by the Carbon Farming initiative. The initiative ignores that the work farmers want and need to do is to produce healthy food for society. This initiative takes us further away from ensuring access to fair and remunerative prices for farmers, which is the real way to support the transition to positive practices for climate change, biodiversity, and food.

It is a real disappointment that in this long-awaited communication within Von Der Leyen's Presidency of the European Commission, there is no evidence of transition towards sustainability, food security and food sovereignty for the European agricultural system.

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