



**ESA Section Cereals and Pulses
Position
on
CAP Reform – Durum Wheat –**

Brussels, 06/11/2003

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1. General

ESA, European Seed Association, is the representative professional association of the European plant breeding, seed trading and production industry. The ESA Section Cereals and Pulses represents more specifically the European Durum Wheat breeders carrying out cost intensive and time consuming research and breeding work on durum wheat varieties corresponding to the need of farmers and the seminola industry. Each plant variety has to comply with clear legal prerequisites as to Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability and must be of satisfactory value for cultivation and use. This VCU is defined in Council Directive 2002/53/EC of 12. June 2002, Common Catalogue, Art. 5 (4) as offering in its qualities, in comparison to other varieties accepted in the national catalogues, at least as far as production in any given region is concerned, a clear improvement either for cultivation or as regards the uses, which can be made of the crops or the products derived there from. Accepted varieties are listed for a period of 10 years, and have to be maintained according to accepted practices of maintenance breeding.

This system assures the supply of the market with highly specialized plant varieties officially accepted and offering all necessary quality features that have been assessed for the official examination.

It is before this background that ESA regrets not to have been involved in the information and consultation process preparing the final decisions on the Durum Wheat quality premium system in the CAP in order to be able to give seed specific input.

2. Specific remarks

2.1. List of varieties qualifying for the quality premium

ESA points to the fact that a.m. system of national acceptance of plant varieties assures the compliance with the quality prerequisites for durum wheat varieties susceptible to receive the quality premium.

This quality requirement is assured throughout the official period of inclusion in the Catalogues. ESA urges the Commission to accept the well-defined and efficiently organised legal practise of variety acceptance as the basis for the list of varieties qualifying for the quality premium.

This leads to the clear position that as long as a variety is listed on the basis of results of official examination on well-defined quality criteria, this variety qualifies for the quality premium. Any shorter period is rejected and would lead to a parallel system of variety evaluation.

Furthermore, the list shall be Community wide and it must be assured that all varieties included will qualify for the premium irrespective of the first national variety acceptance for listing.

2.2. Use of Certified Seeds

Certified seeds are prerequisites guaranteeing the quality required and assuring the necessary return on investment to the breeder.

ESA, whilst acknowledging the obligation to use certified seed in order to qualify for the quality premium, points out, that this would not be sufficient to offer an incentive for farmers to abandon the use of farm saved seed especially in low yielding areas.

ESA therefore notes with satisfaction the options for national governments to delay the decoupling until 2007 or to provide only for partial decoupling, i.e. to keep the coupling for 40% and by this to maintain the obligation to use certified seed.