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Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

12. december 2011
9.1.49

Subject: Agriculture Council discussion on future rural development policy: 15-16 December 2011

Dear Mette Gjerskov,

The Agriculture Council will soon discuss the European Commission proposal on rural development as part of the CAP reform package.

As a member of Eurogroup for Animals the Danish Animal Welfare Society believes that rural development has a role to play to improve farm animal welfare while supporting farmers to become more competitive. Indeed, by adopting innovative systems of production which respect the animals and produce better quality, farmers respond to consumer demand and can get a better market price for their products.

Rural development can contribute to make livestock farming more sustainable as well as animal welfare friendly while keeping jobs in rural areas. Good animal welfare also contributes to good animal and human health, better respect for the environment, and more efficient use of resources.

We believe that to create a level playing field, all farmers should have the possibility to participate in rural development measures which aim at improving farm animal welfare, such as the animal welfare payment (Art 34 of the proposed rural development regulation COM(2011)627) but also training (Art 15: knowledge transfer and information actions), investments (Art 18: investments in physical assets) or participation in quality schemes (Art 17) which include higher animal welfare standards than the legal ones.

We would like to ask your support to include the improvement of animal welfare as a general objective of rural development, together with the other objectives of the CAP, when discussing the Commission proposal at the Council next week. We also would like your support for translating this objective into practical measures accessible to all farmers in the future EU rural development policy.

Yours sincerely,

Britta Riis, Director
Danish Animal Welfare Society
Dyrenes Beskyttelse

cc: Members of the Food Committee of the Danish Parliament (Folketingets Fødevareudvalg)