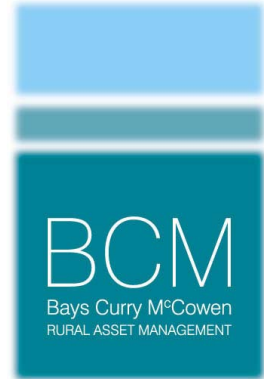


Press release

March 2006



CAP is far from Common

Andrew Bays a Director of BCM , an architectural and rural asset management company in Hampshire, viewed Tony Blair's recent well publicised negotiations with the EU with scepticism. They have certainly resulted in scaling back of the UK's rebate but this is in return for member states agreement that they will look again at the CAP in 2008. Quite apart from the fact that this is only a commitment to review the CAP (ie it is quite possible and in fact likely there will be no change as a result), there is also a more fundamental point – what actually is the CAP?

The “Common” Agricultural Policy is no longer “common” ever since the inception of the Single Payment Scheme. England is virtually unique in its application of a dynamic hybrid scheme, with the majority of countries having opted for a fully historic basis of payment and, in many cases, having negotiated that many coupled elements of support (eg Suckler Cow Payments) remain in force.

This presents considerable difficulty when looking forward to a review of the CAP, as it will have to be reviewed in the knowledge that every Member State is now paying aid to farmers in a totally different way. It is clear that the most radical and heavily reformed scheme is that which applies to England, and it would seem a fairly good guess that when the spotlight comes

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back on the CAP again it will be the UK pushing for further and more radical reform, while other Member States (who are more concerned about the rural vote) will be resisting such moves. It is also clear that now the principle of divergent applications of the CAP is accepted, any reform will be far more sweeping and radical for English Farmers rather than their counterparts in other European countries.

Andrew says “ As a large part of my work involves helping farmers and landowners with their applications for the Single Payment Scheme, I am only too aware of the consequences of not getting this impending review of CAP right, and wait with interest as to how the government intends to handle this”.

For further details please contact Andrew Bays on 01962 763900 or log on to www.bcm.co.uk.

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