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Summary and Conclusions from Copa-Cogecas' Communication seminar: May 15 2013

At Copa-Cogeca Communications Seminar this week, attended by over 50 key communication experts, Copa-Cogeca Presidents, Brussels representatives, members agreed to step up communication activities by setting up a **virtual working party** on an internet page or social media like Linked-in in order to exchange ideas on key communication trends, best channels to communicate, communication campaigns and other key issues. The platform will be set up in the coming days. Two Communication Seminars will be held each year.

The Seminar came in order to share know-how on communication tools for our member organisations, especially on social media and how best to use it, and to hear from high-level Communication experts from the leading EU institutions about how they communicate and operate and what their timetable and views are on key issues. **CAP Policy Update:** Spokesman for Commissioner Ciolos Roger Waite, Press Officers from the European Parliament Jan Jakubov and from EU Council Xavier Pavard outlined state of play on the trialogue talks on CAP reform which began April 11 – 12 meetings have so far taken place and progress has been done but still a way to go and some major stumbling blocks like convergence/capping (voluntary for council and mandatory for EP)/greening/whether young farmer aid should be voluntary (Council) or mandatory (EP). MEPs also pushing for mid-term review on future EU Budget. They are still pushing to get a political agreement by end June on the new CAP. They also highlighted the importance of Twitter in particular for breaking news in Brussels and stressed that the most valued tweets are informative. Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen insisted on the need for a speedy and positive outcome on the new CAP. He also outlined plans for the upcoming United Nations International Year of Family Farms 2014.

National Communication Campaigns: Some highly successful national communication campaigns were presented at the meeting. Klaus Hartikainen MTK Communication Director presented a campaign showing farmers weak position in the food chain and how little they get from the market – with market stalls selling food at cost price to the public – gaining huge media coverage. Upa Press Officer Diego Juste Conesa outlined key tools, with good presence on social media and the importance of UN International Year of Family Farms 2014, with 80% of farms being family farms in Spain. FNSEA Social Media Manager Cynthia Kari and Jean-Baptiste Boucher FNSEA Community Manager explained the benefits and increasing importance of social media, with 45% of French farmers using social media and 80% French farmers using internet. They showcased results of successful campaigns, like FNSEA event "Le tweet est dans le Pre" at the Salons Internationales de L'Agriculture (SIA) attended by Copa-Cogeca and have a strong presence on social media. They stressed traditional and digital communications are complementary. Steffen Thejll Moller from Fleishman-Hillard also outlined best ways to use social media and best channels, pointing out also the benefits of advertising on social media. Asaja-Ava Communications Director Sergio Carbo underlined the importance of traditional media and the fact that there are less and less journalists. He underlined the need to have new info, novelties in a press release – content is king. Most delegates agreed on the importance of having a good mix of traditional and social media and a good website. DBV spokesman Michael Lohse outlined their animal welfare campaigns and how best to

communicate with media on this tricky issue, with many poster campaigns in metros with humorous catch lines, trying to show farmers do not mistreat animals. Sabine Puke, Communication Specialist from the Latvian Agricultural Cooperatives Association outlined the Latvian EU Direct Payments Campaign which focused on increasing direct payments for Baltic States, with actions including a Baltic farmers' protest tractor which set off from Tallin on 14 November and travelled through all Baltic States and reach Brussels by 22 where over 100 Baltic farmers protested. Pedro Narro from Asaja Brussels Office and Gerfried Gruber from the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture Brussels Office warned of the increasing communication challenges on a more general and political level, like from environmentalists, and the need to face these.

Copa-Cogeca Communications Campaign: Copa-Cogeca Press Officer Amanda Cheesley outlined Copa-Cogecas' new competition and Farming Counts Campaign launched on May 13 in Brussels metro stations, the website and social media highlighting the importance of farming and coops to meet growing food demand – set to rise by 70% by 2050. **#votefarming.** Members are encouraged to use #votefarming catch phrase on twitter to promote farming. Outside EU Farm Ministers meeting on May 13, leaflets and tomatoes (from our Belgian cooperative member) were handed out highlighting our demands, and also presented to Irish Minister Covenay in a high-level meeting. Commissioner Ciolos mentioned our tomatoes at EU Farm Ministers meeting this week, saying it would provide energy to reach a CAP deal. Mr Ciolos spokesman Roger Waite posted them on twitter and praised the action. The posters were set up at Schuman, Gare du Midi, Gare Centrale and Merode. Enter our competition and win a prize set to be presented to winners at a cocktail reception at European Parliament in September. The action aims to increase awareness of politicians, EU institutions, public, media in a positive way of the benefits of farming at a crucial time in the EU decision process. So far feedback has been positive. All the presentations have been posted on our Communications Campaign page on Agri-Info.