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European Commission unveils proposals to ease rules and boost support for EU farmers

New measures aim to cut red tape, simplify payments, and promote sustainability while strengthening crisis management and digital systems

Friday, May 16, 2025



On May 14, the European Commission announced a new set of proposals aimed at reducing the administrative burden on farmers across the European Union. The changes are part of a broader effort to simplify the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and make farming more competitive and sustainable. Farmers in the EU have long faced complex paperwork and regulatory requirements, which take time away from their core work and add costs for both themselves and national administrations.

The proposed changes include raising the annual lump-sum payment limit for small farmers from €1,250 to €2,500. This adjustment is designed to make payments easier and more accessible for small-scale producers. In addition, small farmers will be exempt from certain environmental rules and may qualify for payments that reward eco-friendly practices.

Certified organic farms will also benefit from the new rules. They will automatically be considered as meeting some of the EU’s environmental requirements for funding, reducing the need for duplicate checks and paperwork. The proposals also introduce incentives for farmers to protect peatlands and wetlands, which are important for biodiversity and climate goals.

To further streamline oversight, controls on farms will increasingly use satellite technology. Each farm will be limited to one on-the-spot check per year, reducing disruptions and administrative hassle. Crisis management tools are also being strengthened. Farmers affected by natural disasters or animal diseases will have access to new crisis payments and more flexible risk management options.

National administrations will see simpler procedures as well. They will have greater flexibility in adapting their CAP strategic plans, with prior approval from the Commission required only for major amendments. This is expected to speed up decision-making at the national level.

A new funding option is being introduced for small farmers, offering up to €50,000 as a lump-sum payment to help them grow their businesses. At the same time, national administrations are being encouraged to develop digital systems that allow farmers to submit their data just once through a single platform. This move aims to save time and reduce costs by eliminating repetitive data entry.

These measures build on similar simplification steps introduced earlier in 2024. They are part of a larger vision for EU agriculture and food policy that was presented in February 2025. The European Commission plans to continue this process later in the year with a legislative package targeting other policies that affect farmers, agri-food businesses, and government agencies.

The goal of these changes is to make life easier for farmers while supporting environmental sustainability and economic growth in rural areas. By cutting red tape and modernizing procedures, the Commission hopes to ensure that European agriculture remains competitive in a changing global market.