

# Commission report on the Farm Advisory System (FAS)

adopted on 15 November 2010

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# Overview of the presentation

## FAS

- The history of FAS
- What is FAS
- Current rules for FAS
- RD support for FAS

The Commission report on FAS implementation as issued on 15 November 2010

- Voluntary nature
- Scope
- Advisory approach and skills
- Promotion and management

# The history of FAS

- The FAS is a major component of the 2003 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform, to be introduced by 2007.
- The 2003 CAP reform made direct support for farmers dependent on compliance with requirements of public interest “cross compliance”: SMRs related to environment, public and animal health, animal welfare, plant protection products and the maintenance of all agricultural land in GAEC (good agricultural and environmental condition).

# What is FAS

- Member States have the obligation to establish a system for advising farmers on land and farm management: the Farm Advisory System (FAS).
- The advisory activity shall cover at least the SMRs and the GAEC
- The initial purpose was to help farmers facing their cross compliance obligations and to help farmers avoiding financial reductions under cross compliance

# What is FAS

- The field of the FAS is the whole cross-compliance but it is **not limited to these cross-compliance standards**: Member States can decide to enlarge it
- The FAS does not replace the different existing advisory systems in the MSs but officialises a system with a clear goal: cross compliance

# What is FAS

- The 'Farm Advisory System' (FAS) covers the overall organisation and the various public and/or private operators that deliver 'farm advisory services' to a farmer in a Member State
- 'Farm advisory services' (fas) should assess the **specific situation of the farmer** and not only present general information.

# Current rules for FAS

- Community legislation left MSs the flexibility to choose public or private bodies as actors in the FAS
- Farmers may participate in the FAS on a voluntary basis
- 1st pillar rules do not specify conditions as to the frequency of advice, the qualification of advisers, whether the advice has to be paid, etc.

# Current rules for FAS

- Confidential advice: no disclosure of data from the farmer
- Before 2009 MSs had to give priority to the farmers who receive more than € 15000 direct payments per year (not excluding other MSs' priorities): not anymore now

# RD Support for FAS 2007-2013

- For the use of farm advisory services (fas) by farmers:

covering as a minimum SMR + GAEC + occupational safety standards

80 % of the eligible cost per advisory service  
max 1500 € support

- For the setting up of farm advisory services by MSs: degressive over a maximum period of 5 years



# Conditions for RD Support for FAS

- The authorities and bodies selected to provide advisory services to farmers “shall avail of **appropriate resources in the form of qualified staff, administrative and technical facilities and advisory experience and reliability** with respect to the requirements and standards”
- Further guidelines for the use of fas, concerning prioritising certain target groups, frequency of the advice,.. and the selection and supervision of the bodies

## COM Information on FAS implementation:

- 2009 questionnaires sent to MS gathered factual data and asked open questions concerning problems occurred and suggestions for the future FAS policy
- An evaluation study contracted by the Commission
- Bilateral contacts and questions from MS
- Yearly workshops 2006-2010 with MS on FAS implementation covering content, structures, methods and tools

# Commission report on FAS

## 15 November 2010



European Commission  
Agriculture and  
Rural Development



# Commission report on FAS

- The Commission has issued on 15 November 2010 its Report on the application of the Farm Advisory System.
- Given the recent introduction of the FAS, the purpose of the Commission report published is not to offer an exhaustive overview
- but to provide input for a debate in the Council and the European Parliament in the course of 2010-2011

- The start-up phase of Member States' national FAS has required considerable effort, especially from Member States where few if any advisory services were available in the past.
- For other Member States, setting up a FAS has been more a question of coordinating existing services so as to give farmers a single contact point for advice on practical questions.

- First results show the important role that advisors and the FAS coordinating bodies can play in helping farmers understand and implement EU rules.
- The changes proposed by the Commission should in particular promote the FAS to a larger extent and make the advice measure more attractive. The Commission intends to maintain the general framework and flexible architecture of the FAS.
- The FAS is designed to help not only farmers who receive CAP payments but all farmers in the EU.

## *Voluntary or mandatory advice?*

*? Should FAS advice be obligatory for farmers?*

Following advice is by its very nature voluntary. Making advice obligatory for farmers will not guarantee the uptake of the advice and would be inefficient use of funds. An effective FAS is based on a trustful relationship between the farmer and the advisor.

# Voluntary FAS advice

- The Commission considers that FAS advice should be voluntary for farmers, since following advice is by its very nature voluntary — in contrast with compulsory control systems.
- A farmer receiving advice is more likely to understand his cross-compliance obligations, and will thus more readily comply with them.

# Scope of the FAS

- The Commission intends to keep the cross compliance rules to be respected in the core minimum scope of the FAS.
- With new challenges emerging, expectations from advisory services have risen since 2003. The FAS should therefore pro-actively develop and encompass also issues that go beyond legal requirements under cross compliance. At least 12 Member States already do so now.

## *What about control and advice ?*

Even where at first instance it would seem to help targeting advice it is dangerous and even counterproductive to mix advice functions with control mechanisms: it could for instance deter the farmer of explaining the precise problems to the advisor.

Obliging non-compliant farmers to take advice may enhance the perception that the advisor is closely in relation with the inspectors. Building trust requires confidentiality as regards the collected information.

# Separate control and advice !

- The Commission considers that a clear separation between advice and farm inspections is necessary. Farmers often saw the FAS as being strictly about cross compliance and the related system of farm inspections, and this cast it in a negative light.
- Trust between the farmer and the adviser is indeed key in the success of the system

# Separate control and advice !

- The Commission reiterates the emphasis on the rule on non-disclosure of *individual* information from farmers.
- On the other hand, giving advisors *aggregated* data from farm inspections could be useful in view of targeting of the advice, e.g. information on frequently found non-compliances.

# FAS: responsibilities

Advisor	Farmer	Controller
<b>Helps</b> farmer with advice	<b>Responsible</b> for his actions, has to understand the requirements	Controls can lead to sanctions

The advisor has to play its role, explaining the requirements to the farmer and helping him to understand cross-compliance.



# Advisory approach and skills

- An effective FAS is based on a trustful relationship between the farmer and the advisor.
- An advisor should be able to **listen** and think analytically to solve problems at farm level.
- An advisor should first and foremost understand and speaK "the same language" as the farmer.

- One-to-one advice has proved to be particularly effective as it addresses the specific situation of the farm and the farmer, and not only presents general information.
- The FAS advisor should act as a 'general practitioner', interlinking all different aspects of farming with a holistic approach.
- An advisor should explain to farmers not only the EU's requirements but also their objectives and the underlying policies, directing farmers if necessary to specialist advisors.

- Advisors should be suitably qualified and regularly trained, and training sessions organised by the FAS coordinating bodies.
- The effectiveness of the FAS should be ensured by assessing the quantity and quality of advice given (e.g. its usefulness and the level of satisfaction of the farmer).

# Support for the FAS

- There are two rural development policy measures designed to help Member States set up farm advisory services and to help farmers use advice (80% of the advisory cost, 1500 € max).
- The Commission intends to promote the FAS by introducing flexibility in the content
- and in the frequency of uptake of the advisory measure.

# *Why delete the obligation to give advice on all cross-compliance fields ?*

- Cross-compliance requirements should be kept within the core minimum scope of the FAS and adequately covered by FAS advice. The FAS should first and foremost help farmers comply with rules. The flexibility to ask for advice more frequently, together with the flexibility in the obligatory scope per advisory service should make the rural development measure more targeted and attractive.

>>>>>> give attention to the need for advice on **all** cross compliance fields !

- FAS coordinating bodies and advisors should keep giving the necessary attention to all core obligations under the FAS, since farmers asking for advice may not always be aware of their problems and their need for advice on specific cross-compliance issues.

# Promotion of the FAS

- The FAS should better be promoted, for instance by enclosing a list of advisory bodies when sending application forms to farmers, or by arranging for farm inspectors to give that list to the farmer if any infringement is detected.

# Coordination and management of FAS

- The Commission proposes to improve knowledge sharing between actors, for instance between farmers and researchers. The advisor is a useful interface.
- FAS coordinating bodies should enhance the synergies between various instruments such as advice, training, information, extension services and research. For example, hold regular information exchange sessions, once or twice a year.

# Coordination and management of FAS

- > The Commission strongly recommends that FAS coordinating bodies organise basic and regular follow-up training for each advisor, at least on all cross-compliance issues. Such training should cover both the farmers' actual obligations and the underlying policies. Training is particularly needed in the area of new action to deal with, for instance, climate change.
- < Advisors may be very useful in summarising good practices and distributing them.

# Coordination and management of FAS

- FAS advisors will not be able to reply to all questions but should be well informed and able to act as a 'general practitioner', directing farmers if necessary to specialist advisors, or guide him towards sources of relevant information,
- Therefore, FAS coordinating bodies should play an important role in helping the advisors to network, for instance by providing the contact details of specialist advisors or researchers and saying which fields they specialise in.

A man in a grey tank top and blue jeans is sitting on a large haystack, looking at a laptop. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The image has a semi-transparent grid overlay.

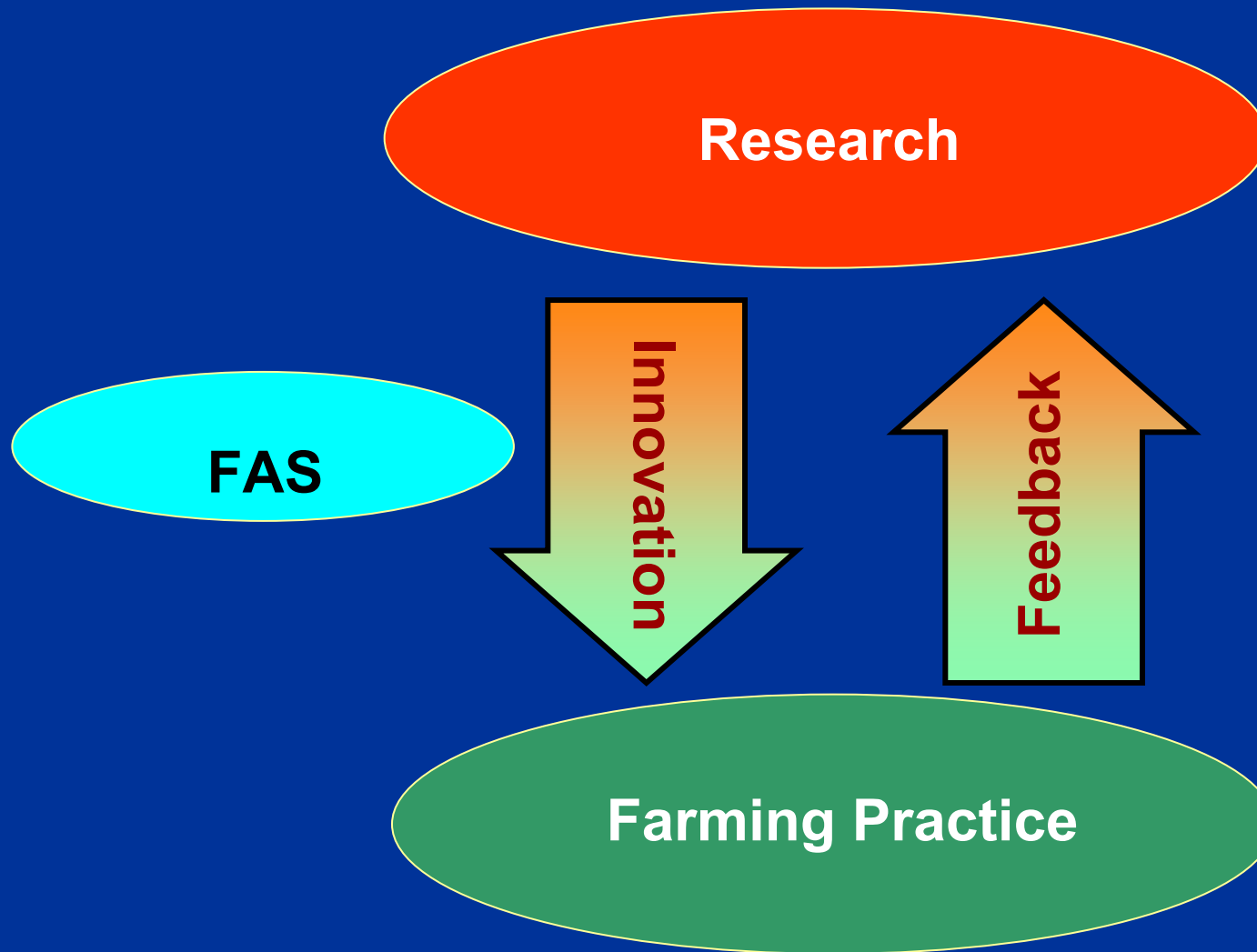
# Innovation in Agriculture

Work in progress...



**European Commission**  
Agriculture and  
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# *The Innovation Challenge*



## *Objectives*

- A competitive agricultural sector, leading on process and product, and contributing to global food security
- Increasing productivity while ensuring sustainable resource management (focus on land) and preserving the environment
- Adaptation to implications climate change and contributing to mitigation by reducing emissions of greenhouse gas
- Faster transfer of knowledge from research to practical farming and ensuring feedback on practical needs to science

**Need for “producing more with less”**



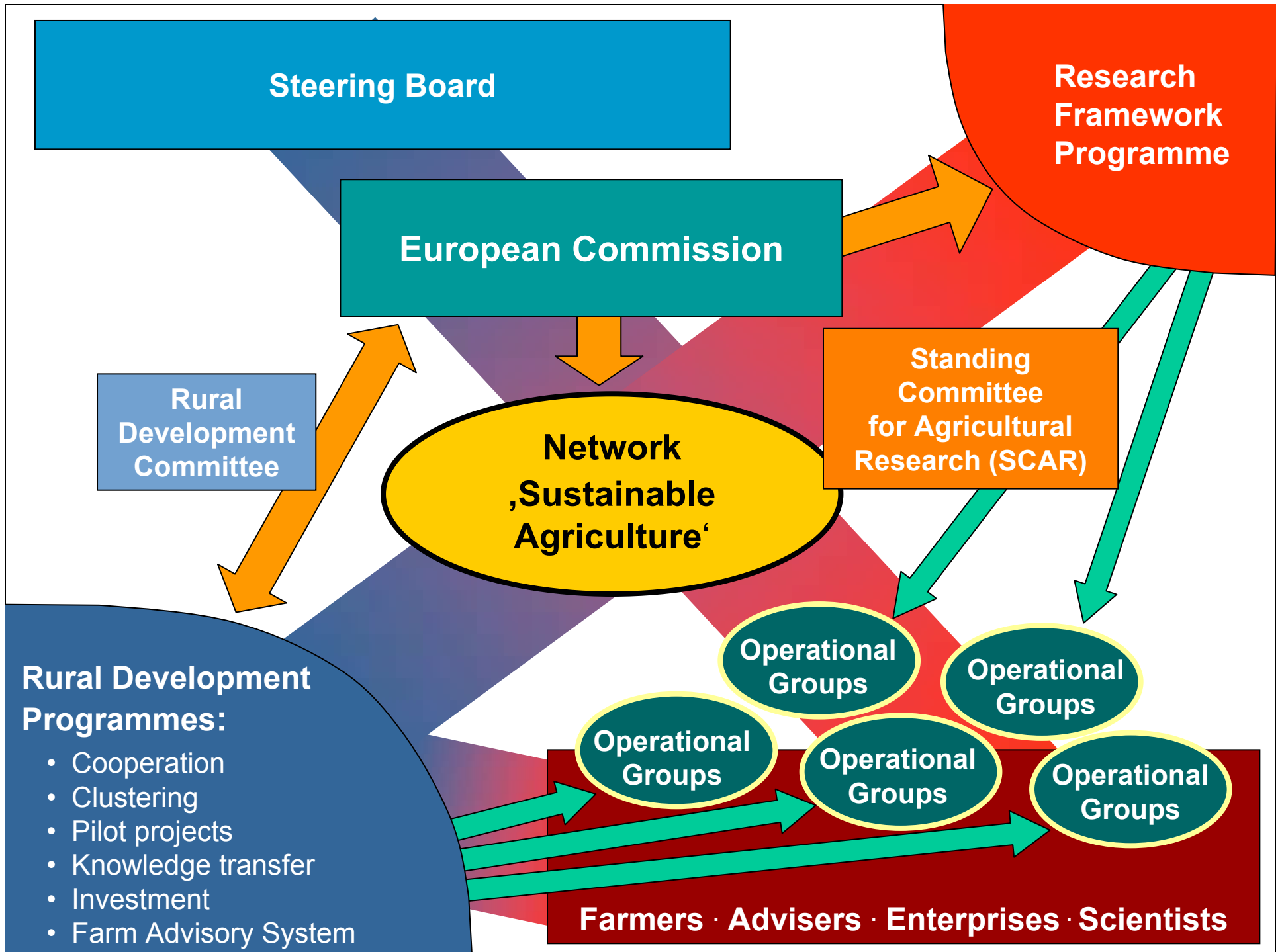
# *Main Actors*

## Network Actors

- Steering Group
- European Commission
- National and regional administrations
- SCAR
- Researchers
- Stakeholders
- Operational Groups

## Actors the Level of 'Operational Groups'

- Programming authorities
- Researchers
- Advisors and extension services
- Farmers
- Enterprises



# Time for discussion.....

Find the report on [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/farm-advisory-system/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/farm-advisory-system/index_en.htm)

