



**mouvement
écologique**

What strategy for promoting vegetable production?

Current statement of the Mouvement Écologique

A recent statement by the Mouvement Écologique on the government's legislative project to promote the construction of greenhouses for fruit and vegetable cultivation by means of 20 million€ has triggered a reaction from the "Lëtzebuenger Landesuebstbaueräins".

Reading the reaction of the national organisation, one gets the impression that the Mouvement Écologique has spoken out against the cultivation of fruit and vegetables in this country. This is not the case!

On the contrary. The Mouvement Écologique has been campaigning in favour of this for umpteen years. The Mouvement Écologique also considers it sensible for the state to promote this cultivation.

However, the Mouvement Écologique is rather **questioning** which **strategy** is being pursued **to promote vegetable production**, which plants should now be supported with vigour and what the **cultivation criteria** should be for such large-scale projects. No more and no less.

Certain statements from this letter are taken up

1. Geméis- an Uebstbau zu Lëtzebuerg: A narrow opportunity for the agricultural industry or for narrowly defined agriculture?

The association's letter states that there is already an agricultural subsidy for smaller farms that build greenhouses. This is known.

The fact is, however, that the development of vegetable growing is not progressing to the desired extent despite improved agricultural subsidies. **There are still too few farms applying for the available agricultural subsidies to guarantee an increased supply of vegetables** (how many funds has the Ministry paid out to date?). There are certainly reasons for this (think of the lack of training and further education structures, lack of specialised personnel, farm managers and know-how transfer or advisory structures in vegetable growing, barriers to access to vegetable growing or barriers to installation). This is precisely where the government should start: Why is there currently such a lack of interest from small and medium-sized farms - which are to be preserved in Luxembourg? How can these obstacles be overcome?

What kind of agriculture do we want for tomorrow?

Do we really want to go in the direction of investing 20 million€ in larger, more industrial operations in the future (after all, only greenhouses costing at least 2.5 million are financed and can cost 30 million)?

The Mouvement Ecologique recognises the risk that this measure will reduce rather than increase the willingness of small and medium-sized producers to diversify. This is in the full knowledge that - if there are then a few such food groups in Luxembourg - **smaller producers** will be **virtually excluded from certain markets**. Because we know that the creation of large companies will put smaller structures under considerable pressure. For example, the food groups will be able to organise production and distribution in such a way that smaller or medium-sized producers will not be able to keep up and will be left behind.

The clear message is therefore: **Yes to the promotion of fruit and vegetable cultivation in Luxembourg, but not without ignoring the hurdles faced by small and medium-sized businesses or even increasing the obstacles to their development opportunities.**

2. Kloer Ubaukrittären am Gesetz - e consensus?

With regard to cultivation methods, the association explains in detail that sustainable cultivation methods already exist today. These statements are entirely in the spirit of the Mouvement Ecologique.

Contrary to what has been claimed, the Mouvement Ecologique has never claimed that growing fruit and vegetables in greenhouses is necessarily associated with high pesticide, water and energy consumption.

Precisely because this is not necessarily the case, the Mouvement Ecologique is in favour of defining **transparent sustainability criteria in the law itself**. This would create clarity from the outset as to what taxpayers' money is or is not being used for. This is in order not to expose producers who respect sustainability criteria to competition from other producers.

Actually, if one interprets the comments in the association's statement correctly the definition of such criteria should also be in their favour. According to the association, it would even be possible to prescribe organic, since according to the reaction these criteria are already frequently taken into account anyway.

Accordingly: Nothing should actually stand in the way of creating clear guidelines in the law itself.

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