

THE CHANGING POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE EUROPEAN
UNION

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ABSTRACT

The EU has undergone two major expansions in just three years, enlarging from 15 members (EU-15) to 25 members in May 2004, and then adding Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007. Agriculture has played a central role in all the enlargement negotiations as a result of the significant levels of government support in the EU for the sector, the sector's importance in terms of the overall EU budget, and the large number of farmers in the new member states (NMS). A major reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was carried out in parallel to the first enlargement, and included changes to the way that agriculture was supported in the EU. Reform of the CAP is ongoing, with a timetable for the elimination of dairy quotas included in the latest reforms. As the link between production and support is broken, the policy most influencing market developments has become that relating to biofuels, whose production and consumption in the EU has expanded rapidly in recent years. In this dissertation, three papers are presented that examine aspects of each of these developments.