Many farmers and food companies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have problems selling on international markets and getting access to quality inputs, finance, and technology. Increasing product quality and safety demands by importing countries and large retailing companies further complicate market access. At the same time, investments by large retailing and agribusiness companies have had major effects for farms and local food companies in this region. One very important aspect of these increased investments is the growth of contracting and vertical coordination within the food chains. The implications are important but often not well understood.

The World Bank organizes a seminar in Rome to present the findings of a World Bank study on “The Dynamics of Vertical Co-ordination in Agro-food Chains in Europe and Central Asia”. The seminar will include presentations by the main author of the study, Prof. Johan Swinnen, as well as by experts who did case studies for this study in your region. The seminar will provide opportunities to discuss these findings and discuss the implications for government policies and World Bank strategies for transition countries.

Programme (9.00 – 12.30):

Chair: Laura Tuck or Benoit Blarel, The World Bank

9.00 – 10.30

• Welcome and Opening by the Chair

• “Vertical Co-ordination in ECA: the Issues” by Johan Swinnen

• Case study findings

  • Dairy in Romania – Dr. Siemen van Berkum

  • Dairy in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Poland – Dr. Liesbeth Dries
• Comparative study of agri-food chains in Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine – Dr. John White/Dr. Matthew Gorton

• Survey of multinationals -- Dr. Siemen van Berkum

10.30 – 11.00 : Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30

• Retail and F&V in Czech, Slovak, Poland and Russia – Dr. Liesbeth Dries

• “Vertical Co-ordination in ECA : Key Conclusions and Implications” by Johan Swinnen

Discussion opening by Prof. Csaba Csaki, co-ordinator of DFID study on “Re-governing markets” for Eastern Europe