

In his opening speech to the Congress of the Farmers' Central Federation in Saku today, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves emphasized the principle of equal treatment for agricultural workers.

According to the Head of State, Estonian and European Union supports for rural life are intended for the development of agricultural production and investments, not as additional profits or gifts for those who can manage nicely on their own. The President believes that the Estonian state must take this into consideration when implementing the Rural Life Development Plan that will soon come into force.

“We do not have to copy the European Union models from previous periods, when the greater part of the money in the field of agriculture went to the bank accounts of a very small number of agribusinesses,” said President Ilves.

He said that a great reorganization is expected in the financing models for Europe's common agricultural policies, which will place greater importance on rural life as a lifestyle.

The Head of State believes that Estonia must base its agricultural policies on three central objectives, which are the competitiveness of production, the ability to supply the Estonian population with domestic and healthy foodstuffs, and the preservation of rural production on small farms.

President Ilves called on the farmers to increase their communal cooperation and emphasized the role of the Farmers' Central Federation in protecting the interests of small and mid-sized farms.