Text consolidated by Valsts valodas centrs (State Language Centre) with amending laws of:

24 May 2001 [shall come into force on 20 June 2001];

20 March 2003 [shall come into force on 1 May 2003];

7 April 2004 [shall come into force on 1 May 2004];

16 December 2004 [shall come into force on 11 January 2005];

12 October 2006 [shall come into force on 27 October 2006];

13 March 2008 [shall come into force on 27 March 2008];

12 June 2009 [shall come into force on 1 July 2009];

7 December 2017 [shall come into force on 3 January 2018].

If a whole or part of a section has been amended, the date of the amending law appears in square brackets at the end of the section. If a whole section, paragraph or clause has been deleted, the date of the deletion appears in square brackets beside the deleted section, paragraph or clause.

The *Saeima*1 has adopted

President has proclaimed the following law:

**Rural Support Service Law**

**Chapter I**

**General Provisions**

**Section 1. Terms Used in this Law**

The terms used in this Law are as follows:

1) **State aid**– State financial aid the objective of which is to increase competitiveness of the natural and legal persons employed in agriculture and countryside;

2) **European Union aid**– financial aid of the European Union the objective of which is to increase competitiveness of the natural and legal persons employed in agriculture and countryside;

3) **accreditation**– taking of a decision on the conformity of the Rural Support Service with the criteria for accreditation of the structure, activity, and financial control;

4) **certifying authority**– an independent and competent third party which confirms by an opinion the conformity of the Rural Support Service with the accreditation criteria and carries out an annual external audit;

5) **internal audit**– evaluation of the internal control system of the institution for the purpose of providing recommendations for the improvement of such system in order to ensure efficient State administration activity;

6) **external audit**– evaluation of the efficiency of activity of and use of finances by the institution carried out by the certifying authority;

7) [16 December 2004].

[*20 March 2003; 16 December 2004*]

**Section 2. Purpose of this Law**

The purpose of this Law is to ensure a single implementation of the agricultural and rural support policy, and also the administration system of the State and European Union aid in the country.

**Chapter II**

**Functions of the Rural Support Service and Sources of the Financing Thereof**

[*7 April 2004*]

**Section 3. Rural Support Service**

(1) The Rural Support Service (hereinafter – the Service) is an institution of direct administration under subordination of the Ministry of Agriculture which is responsible for the single implementation of the State aid and European Union aid policy in the country, supervises the conformity with the laws and regulations in the field of agriculture, and performs other functions related to the implementation of the agricultural and rural support policy.

(2) [7 April 2004]

(3) [7 April 2004]

(4) [7 April 2004]

[*7 April 2004*]

**Section 3.1 Electronic Application System**

(1) In order to improve efficiency of the State aid and European Union aid monitoring, the Service shall establish and maintain the special online form – electronic application system.

(2) The Service shall ensure access to the electronic application system for an applicant for aid, using the user authentification means issued by the Service or the solution for the identification of a person of the State information system integrator under supervision of the State Regional Development Agency.

(3) Applicants for aid shall submit the submission for the receipt of State aid and European Union aid, and also the documents appended thereto to the Service, using the electronic application system, unless it is provided for in the laws and regulations governing the procedures for granting the relevant aid that the submission shall be submitted in paper form. If the document is submitted, using the electronic application system, such document shall also have legal force if the detail “signature” is not on it.

[*7 December 2017*]

**Section 4. Functions of the Service**

(1) The Service shall perform, within the scope of its competence, the following functions:

1) administer the State aid and European Union aid to countryside, agriculture, forestry, and fishery [accept and assess submissions (projects) for the receipt of aid, take the decision to grant financing or to refuse to grant it, decide on disbursement of the aid or refusal to disburse it, and carry out accounting of the disbursed aid and control of the use thereof];

2) request from natural and legal persons the information necessary for maintaining registers and databases in accordance with the procedures laid down in laws and regulations;

3) issue the permits, confirmations, and special permits (licences) specified in laws and regulations;

4) represent the interests of manufacturers of non-processed agricultural production in a court;

5) submit claims to a court arising from the liabilities of natural and legal persons in respect to the use of State aid and European Union aid if it is done not in accordance with laws and regulations;

6) in the cases specified in the law, examine administrative offence cases and impose administrative penalties;

7) implement intervention measures on the market of agricultural products;

8) administer the regimen of external trade of agricultural products and processed agricultural products in accordance with the procedures laid down in laws and regulations;

9) [7 December 2017];

10) administer plant produce quotas in accordance with the procedures laid down in laws and regulations;

11) provide information to the European Commission in accordance with the procedures laid down in laws and regulations.

(2) The Service shall be exempted from court expenditures in claims arising from the liabilities of natural and legal persons in respect of the use of State aid and European Union aid if it is done not in accordance with laws and regulations. Recovery in such cases is made in favour of the State.

[*12 June 2009; 7 December 2017 / Amendment regarding the deletion of Clause 6 of Paragraph one shall be included in the wording of the Law as of the day of coming into force of the relevant amendments to the Administrative Violations Code of Latvia. See Paragraph 11 of Transitional Provisions*]

**Section 5. Sources of Financing Necessary for the Performance of the Functions of the Service**

(1) The sources of financing for the State administration functions delegated to the Service shall be as follows:

1) subsidy of the State budget from general revenue;

2) revenue from the paid services provided by the Service in accordance with the laws and regulations regarding paid services;

3) gifts, donations, and foreign non-refundable technical aid.

(2) The funds from the State budget intended for such purpose shall be used for the financing of intervention measures. Revenue from the sale of products purchased through intervention shall be used in order to finance intervention and State aid measures in agriculture in the future.

[*20 March 2003; 7 April 2004; 13 March 2008*]

**Section 6. Competence of the Minister for Agriculture**

[7 April 2004]

**Chapter III**

**Rights of Officials and Employees of the Service**

[*7 April 2004*]

**Section 7. Officials and Employees of the Service**

[7 April 2004]

**Section 8. Duties of Officials of the Service**

[7 April 2004]

**Section 9. Director of the Service**

[7 April 2004]

**Section 10. Manager of the Board**

[7 April 2004]

**Section 11. Rights of Officials and Employees of the Service**

When supervising the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the State aid and European Union aid, and also when performing other functions of the Service specified in this Law, its officials shall carry out the following within the scope of their competence:

1) verify whether the requirements of laws and regulations are conformed to;

2) suspend or prohibit those activities by which laws and regulations are violated;

3) take decisions, provide opinions, and issue orders, examine materials on the violations of the laws and regulations within the competence of the Service;

4) request and receive free of charge written information from natural and legal persons which is necessary for the administration of the State aid and European Union aid, and also become acquainted with the relevant documents.

**Chapter IV**

**Enforcement of the Decisions of Officials of the Service and Procedures for the Contesting and Appealing Thereof**

[*20 March 2003 / See Transitional Provisions*]

**Section 12. Compliance with the Requirements of Officials of the Service**

The decisions taken and orders issued by officials of the Service within the scope of the competence specified in law shall be mandatory for the natural and legal persons subject to control and supervision of the Service who or which apply for the State aid and European Union aid and to whom or which it has been granted.

**Section 12.1 Notification of the Document Issued by the Service**

(1) The Service shall notify the applicant for aid of the issued document, using the electronic application system, except for the case specified in Paragraph three of this Section, and concurrently ensure the availability of the relevant communication and document in the account of the official electronic address for the applicant for aid for whom the account of the official electronic address has been activated.

(2) The decision created electronically in the information system of the Service on the submission of the applicant for aid for the receipt of State aid and European Union aid and the documents related thereto shall be binding without the signature of an official. In such case, the indication “Dokuments ir sagatavots elektroniski un ir derīgs bez paraksta” [The document has been prepared electronically and is valid without a signature] shall be on the decision on the submission of the applicant for aid for the receipt of State aid and European Union aid and the documents related thereto.

(3) An applicant for aid – natural person who is not performing economic activity – has the right to choose either to receive the documents issued by the Service in the electronic application system or in the form of a printed document.

[*7 December 2017 / See Paragraph 10 of Transitional Provisions*]

**Section 13. Procedures for Contesting and Appealing Administrative Acts Issued by Officials of the Service**

The administrative acts issued by officials of the Service may be contested and appealed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Law according to the following procedures:

1) the administrative acts issued by the heads of units of the board may be contested by submitting a submission to the head of the relevant board;

2) the administrative acts issued by the officials of units of the central headquarters of the Service and by the heads of boards may be contested by submitting a relevant submission to the Service;

3) the administrative acts issued by the Director of the Service may be appealed to the court.

[*20 March 2003 / See Transitional Provisions*]

**Chapter V**

**Accreditation of the Service and Assessment of the Conformity Thereof**

**Section 14. Accreditation of the Service**

(1) The Ministry of Agriculture shall accredit the Service for the performance of those functions which are necessary for the administration of the European Union aid.

(2) The conformity of the Service for the accreditation in respect of performance of those functions which are necessary for the administration of the European Union aid shall be assessed in accordance with the conditions and criteria which are included in Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) NO 485/2008 and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 907/2014 of 11 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to paying agencies and other bodies, financial management, clearance of accounts, securities and use of euro (hereinafter – the accreditation criteria).

(3) On the basis of the opinion of the certifying authority, the Ministry of Agriculture shall, within a month after receipt of the opinion of the certifying authority, take the decision to grant accreditation to the Service.

(4) The Ministry of Agriculture shall inform the European Commission in writing of taking the decision to accredit the Service.

[*12 October 2006; 7 December 2017*]

**Section 15. Assessment of the Conformity of the Service**

(1) The conformity of the Service and the external audit for the current year of the annual financial statement drawn up by the Service shall be assessed by the certifying authority which is selected by the Ministry of Agriculture in accordance with tender procedures. The certifying authority shall provide an opinion on the conformity of the Service with the accreditation criteria.

(2) The certifying authority shall submit the prepared opinion to the Ministry of Agriculture and the European Commission.

(3) The operation of the control system of the Service in accordance with the declaration of assurance laid down in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 907/2014 of 11 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to paying agencies and other bodies, financial management, clearance of accounts, securities and use of euro shall ensure the compliance with the accreditation criteria and justification of payments at least in the amount of 98 per cent of the total amount of payments made within the framework of the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund or European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

[*12 October 2006; 13 March 2008; 7 December 2017*]

**Section 16. Additional Accreditation**

(1) If the Service fails to fulfil any of the accreditation criteria, the Ministry of Agriculture shall grant additional accreditation to it, determining a time period for the elimination of the deficiencies established.

(2) If the Service fails to eliminate the deficiencies within the specified time period, the Ministry of Agriculture shall cancel the provisional accreditation granted to the Service and inform the European Commission thereof.

[*12 October 2006*]

**Transitional provisions**

1. The Service shall be the successor in the rights and obligations of the Rural Support Service subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture.

2. [25 May 2001]

3. The Law shall come into force on the day following its proclamation.

4. The Rural Support service shall be the successor in the rights and obligations of *bezpeļņas organizācija valsts akciju sabiedrība “Lauksaimniecības tirgus intervences aģentūra”* [the non-profit-making organisation State stock company Agricultural Market Intervention Agency].

[*20 March 2003*]

5. The special permits (licences) issued by the non-profit-making organisation State stock company Agricultural Market Intervention Agency for export and import shall be valid until expiry of the time period indicated therein.

[*20 March 2003*]

6. Amendments to the title of Chapter IV and Section 13 of the Law in relation to contesting administrative acts shall come into force concurrently with the Administrative Procedure Law.

[*20 March 2003; 7 April 2004*]

7. From 1 May 2003 the law On Latvian Grain Market and State Grain Reserve (*Latvijas Republikas Augstākās Padomes un Valdības Ziņotājs*, 1993, No. 22./23; *Latvijas Republikas Saeimas un Ministru Kabineta Ziņotājs*, 1995, Nos. 5, 20; 1997, No. 16; 1998, No. 6; 1999, Nos. 19, 22; 2000, No. 12.; 2002, No. 2) is repealed.

[*20 March 2003*]

8. Until the day of entering into effect of the By-laws of the Rural Support Service, but not later than until 1 January 2005, Cabinet Regulation No. 366 of 24 October 2000, By-laws of the Rural Support Service, shall apply, insofar as they are not in contradiction with this Law.

[*7 April 2004*]

9. The conformity of the Service for accreditation which is granted in relation to the performance of those functions which are necessary for the administration of such European Union aid which is issued on the basis of the agreements between the European Union and the Republic of Latvia shall remain in effect until complete fulfilment of the commitments specified in the relevant agreements.

[*12 October 2006*]

10. The Service shall apply the requirement of Section 12.1, Paragraph one of this Law for the availability of communication and documents in the account of the official electronic address from 1 June 2018 in relation to natural persons and from1 January 2020 in relation to legal persons.

[*7 December 2017*]

11. Amendment regarding the deletion of Section 4, Paragraph one, Clause 6 of this Law shall come into force concurrently with the relevant amendments to the Administrative Violations Code of Latvia.

[*7 December 2017 / The abovementioned amendment shall be included in the wording of the Law as of the day of coming into force of the relevant amendments to the Administrative Violations Code of Latvia*]

The Law has been adopted by the *Saeima* on 6 April 2000.

President V. Vīķe-Freiberga

Rīga, 27 April 2000