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At the moment vines in Bulgaria are less than 1 million decares Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Dimitar Peichev said. He reviewed that when Bulgaria joined the EU, the country declared 1 530 000 decares, BNR reported.

"It turned out that there are a lot of abandoned or extirpated areas", Peichev pointed out. In his words those have been transferred to national reserve and can become vineyards.

Next year a new programme will start, supporting vine-growing. Farmers can obtain 80 per cent of the funding needed for crop insurance, as well as for bird netting.

Vine-growers can obtain funding per decare, covering 75% of their costs. In his words those would amount to about 4020 BGN per decare. The amount for this type of payments for this year is almost 80 million euros.

All documents for agricultural lands in the area of Varna have already been defined and farmers will get their direct payments, including those for grazing land and meadows, deputy minister Peichev announced. He said funding will be transferred by February, 20th. Farmers in the area of Varna will gain at least 80 million BGN.

In his words there are serious problems with the lands only in the area of Kurdzhali and Smolian. On the topic of misappropriations with EU funds Peichev commented that there are not too many companies which have tried to commit fraud.

Reaction against them was maybe a little slower and that caused the serious problems", the deputy explained. He also added that the SAPARD examinations are still on-going and there is an idea for forming an additional group to work on the programme.

The aim is to start preliminary check-ups of the applicants in order not to allow fraud and for the honest farmers to be able to work normally. Peichev did not eliminate the possibility for EU experts to take part in the additional examination group.