General questions:

Name of farmer

N° of the interview

Place:

Province

Structure of the farm business

* What is the current size of your farm in hectares?
* And this is a stable size?
* And how many hectares do you use for crop cultivation?
* Which crops do you grow?
* And do you rotate crops?
* How long is a typical rotation cycle?
* And which crops do you rotate?
* How do you decide which crops to rotate?
* Do you also breed animals?
* What is your main source of income?

Sugar production

* How many hectares of sugar beets do you grow?
* And how long have you been growing sugar beet?
* Have you increased or decreased the sugar beet cultivation in the past few years?
* Have you experienced any income fluctuations related to sugar beet in recent years?
* What is your reaction to this drop in income?
* What is your role within the union of sugar-beet farmers?

Module 1: Production factors

* Have the prices for sugar-beet production factors increased in recent years?
* Is the price of sugar beet increasing in line with these price increases?
* What are the main costs in the production of sugar beet?
* Which strategies do you use or consider to reduce costs?
* Do you join forces with others to buy production inputs or to invest in new machinery in order to reduce costs?
* Does the farmers’ union make it easier to buy inputs?
* Other strategies

Module 2: Finances and risk

* Have you taken out any loans in recent years?
* Has it become more difficult to secure a loan since the last financial crisis?
* Is it possible to set aside some money during the good years, as a reserve for more difficult years ahead?
* Have you benefited from any investment subsidies so far, e.g. through VLIF (the Flemish Agricultural Investment Fund)?
* Can you tell me a little more about the investment subsidies from VLIF? How does this work exactly?
* What are the main financial risks of sugar-beet production?
* How do you protect your production from this risk? What can be done to counter it?
* Do you think that the risk is spread evenly across the supply chain?
* Would you agree that the farmers’ union plays an important role in risk prevention against climate conditions or other crises?
* Are there any other things that the union could do to improve risk prevention?

Module 3 : Product standards

* The production standards for sugar beet are fixed. What evolution have you seen in recent years in terms of quality standards?
* Do you agree the standards and the way they are applied are clear once you proceed to the sale?
* Do you receive any European subsidies for specific activities?
* Does the farmers’ union facilitate production according to the standards?

Module 4 : Liberalisering

* Next year, the quota will be abolished. How do you think the sugar beet price will evolve?
* There are only two producers in Belgium. Is there a difference in price evolution between the two?
* Do you think that the Belgian sugar-beet producers are competitive in Europe and globally?
* What are our competitive advantages for sugar-beet production in Belgium?
* What does the rain do to the sugar beets?
* How important is the coordination committee in protecting the profit margins from industry?
* Is there scope for more consultation within the chain in order to protect profit margins?
* Do you feel farmers are losing interest in joining the union?
* Is this in relation to lower prices?

Module 5: Organisatie van de teelt van andere gewassen

* Are there any new applications for the by-products of sugar beet, which could be used in the future in Belgium?
* Are there any crops that have priority for you?
* Have you joined any other groups for your other crops?