



**Media statement
Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture
Reims, France**

January 25, 2017, Reims, France

FFA Regional urges European Agriculture to turn challenges into opportunities

Participants to the Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture in Reims (France) agreed today that unless there is a significant course correction, agricultural production around the world is at risk.

Europe in particular is facing serious challenges in finding its new generation of farming entrepreneurs. Low agricultural prices and biodiversity preservation are interrelated challenges to which finding solutions is not easy.

In order to deliver on both production and environmental protection, there was broad agreement amongst FFA Regional participants that Europe's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU's biggest budget item, remains the best tool with which to effect change and help the European rural areas turn challenges into opportunities.

However, significant divisions remain between those who would prioritise production goals and those who wish to see the same CAP funds address greater environmental protection.

During the discussions in Reims, FFA Regional speakers and participants agreed that the new CAP should follow the direction set out by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and that the preservation of worldwide ecosystems must be a top priority.

Furthermore, participants agreed that agriculture has a key role to play in addressing global challenges and thus must be moved to the centre of the food systems agenda and of SDG implementation.

There is vast potential and scope for innovation and the application of IT technology to agriculture. Thanks to precision tools, new breeding techniques and good

cooperation between farmers and institutions, greater harvests could be achieved while reducing pressure to the environment. Still, FFA Regional participants expressed concerns as to whether Europe would allow its land managers full access to these potential benefits.

The discussion and debate held today in Reims are part of a Europe-wide search for solutions to the questions raised at the main FFA event in Brussels, which will see its 10th anniversary edition in Brussels on March 28 of this year.

Christoph Büren, ELO President said: *“A growing global population, a changing climate combined with continued pressure on the environment call for increased food production using more sustainable methods which must be achieved at a time of low agricultural prices and political uncertainty. Without significant changes at the global, European and local level, future generations could face not just reduced production, but also increasingly severe biodiversity losses.”*

Pierre-Olivier Drège, Director General, AGPB shared: *“To reconcile the productivity of soils and plants with high technology and health standards and with a minimal ecological footprint is a real challenge for French cereal farmers. Produce more, produce better is their motto. Therefore they are constantly seeking bio-performance, which is a healthy mix of ecological, economical and yield performance of the soil.”*

Denis Tardit, President Syngenta France said: *“The promise of new agricultural technologies - ranging from green biotechnologies, precision agriculture and big data - offer unprecedented opportunities to feed growing populations using less resources regardless of the production model”.*

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Notes to editors

The regional FFA in Reims is part of the FFA series of conferences, which aim to address topics of both food and environmental security. Today’s event, held at the Centre de Congrès in Reims, first examined the global need for sustainable food production, especially in alignment with several of the SDGs, before focussing on how Europe’s Common Agriculture Policy could contribute. The final session was dedicated to innovative solutions that can help farmers and land managers to deliver the needed changes on the ground.

About the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA)

The annual Forum and regional events are an initiative of the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO) and Syngenta. FFA brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to catalyse thinking on the way European agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges that it faces in delivering food and environmental security. The Forum was created in 2008 in response to a belief that many EU policies impacting agriculture are focused on solving yesterday’s problems, such as overproduction, and do not deal with new challenges and market opportunities. Challenges include feeding a growing world population, demand for a higher quality diet, increased demand for renewable sources of energy and changing weather

patterns. With limited arable land available, there is a need to sustainably maximize production from that already under cultivation. Every year, as well as the annual Forum in Brussels FFA organises two regional events, with its local partners to continue the discussion at regional level.

www.forumforagriculture.com

About the ELO

The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 28 EU Member States and beyond which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit, the ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. The ELO promotes a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

www.elo.org

About Syngenta

Syngenta is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources. Through world class science and innovative crop solutions, our 28,000 people in over 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown. We are committed to rescuing land from degradation, enhancing biodiversity and revitalizing rural communities.

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