

CountrySide

European Landowners' Organization

N° 167

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2017 - BIMONTHLY - EN

**Regional Forum for
the Future of Agriculture:
Can France Remain
a Global Agricultural
Player?**

Christoph BÜREN

ELO President





D. TARDIT, M. PORTIER, S. ABIS, C. VAUTRIN, P.O. DREGÉ

Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture: Can France Remain a Global Agricultural Player?

The Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture took place in Reims last January and discussed global competitiveness, the future of the CAP and the integration of the circular economy into agricultural processes.

William de GRUNNE, ELO



The FFA kicked off with an introductory speech from ELO's President, Christoph BÜREN. His speech introduced the topics of the day; food and environmental security being central to our survival and one cannot be achieved without the other. He also explained that even if the discussions in Brussels are vital, the essential initiatives can only take place locally in all regions of Europe. These will create the changes needed, and local stakeholders are the ones who must drive progress in the countryside.

During his short introduction to the first panel, Pierre-Olivier DRÈGE noted that the region of Champagne-Ardenne is an ideal region to talk about future of agri-

culture which is its major economic activity. Here, local agriculture also plays a role on a global scale with exclusive products such as champagne. The panellists then highlighted three major goals that are key for the development of French and European agricultural regions to allow them to strengthen their position on the global market. There is a need for ecologic, economic and social development which can be driven by innovation.

The panellists insisted that farmer should produce for the global marketplace; France has many advantages for that type of production such as well-educated farmers, agronomists and researchers, an ideal climate and a strong sectorial struc-

ture through cooperatives. Soil fertility is abundant and France has well-developed and efficient logistics systems that make the country globally competitive. However, the panel also warned that the loss of even one of these advantages would be enough to weaken France's position.

Together with education, innovation can build a new form of agriculture that is more adaptable to swift changes. Should climate change, for example, force the production of certain products to new regions, world markets could quickly be destabilised. If France managed create a flexible agricultural system, such crises could be avoided. According to the panel, this meant that 21st century farmers



P. LECOUEY, J.M. CHAUVET, P. BORDES, D. CAUSSE, J.P. BORDES

need to be prepared to change their production models.

A crucial instrument that allows for a flexible, competitive and sustainable agriculture is the Common Agricultural Policy. The reform of this policy, which has just gotten underway, will be form the new direction of Europe, according to Achim IRIMESCU, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representation of Romania to Europe. Starting the second panel, he explained that the CAP is the most integrated common policy for EU Member States. However, he also noted that it is not sufficiently adapted for global developments, and that its scale and complexity could hinder the need for drastic changes.

The two other participants of the panel, Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE, Director General of the French Ministry of Agriculture and Céline CHARVERIAT, Executive Director of IEEP, supported the need for CAP change and simplification. The panel concluded that the CAP should promote sustainability and reshape the ecological footprint of agriculture, as the environment and the agriculture are fundamentally linked.

The panel also concluded that risk management is not well developed within the CAP; the current safety nets are either insufficient or not well balanced – according to the panel, these tools unequally divide support to different European regions. Last year showed us that European agriculture is also susceptible to crises and lacks the tools that allow policy makers and farmers to cushion the blow. This

lack, the panel warned, weakens the long-term position of Europe on the global marketplace and depending on the available funds in the CAP crisis budget remains insufficient.

Further complicating the future of agriculture is the lack of understanding of modern agriculture at both the individual consumer as well as global level. Too often, the sector finds itself underrepresented or ignored, leading to the need for a more integrated CAP that projects a global political reach.

“Mission Innovation 2025” was the headline of the day’s third event. Containing 30 innovative projects, the report develops three priorities for a new agricultural revolution. The first is to develop a systematic agricultural approach to combat climate change, with the second looking at new technologies and tools for agriculture. The third priority is to empower different stakeholders to generate experimental research that can develop Europe’s competitive edge.

This report was presented to the French Ministry of Agriculture at the event, and serves to bring new ideas in French agriculture. Underpinning the three priorities are key elements such as technological advancement, developing France’s agricultural knowledge base and improving life-long learning for farmers and other stakeholders.

After the short introduction the panel brought forward a series of examples of innovation, such as the bio-refinery of

Bazancourt; a large complex of scientific research, industry, education and innovation. These four elements come together at Bazancourt to work hand in hand to achieve a maximum efficiency, reusing as much waste as possible by reusing it again as resource for another process within the complex. Other examples included fertilizers and machinery, which are becoming more and more intertwined as technology advances; more efficient fertilizers can be spread by ICT-adapted machinery to apply precise dosages which avoid the current issue environmental damage through over-application.

Christoph BÜREN summarised the day’s conference by noting that tomorrow’s agriculture needs not just innovation, flexibility and a new CAP, but mainly a renewed commitment from Europe and its land managers. The role of agriculture, he said, was no longer a local affair; it is a global enterprise and France has all the tools needed to be a leader. Like nature, agriculture should adapt and evolve to make sure that food and environmental security are met.

These discussions will continue at the FFA2017 in Brussels on March 28th.

For more information and free registration, please check www.forumforagriculture.com, and follow @ForumforAg. Use #FFA2017 to share your thoughts and join us on the day.

10th
2008•2017



FORUM FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

Where agriculture &
environment meet

Tuesday, March 28, 2017 – Square, Brussels



Since 2008, the Forum for the Future of Agriculture has provided the highest European and international platform to debate sustainable agriculture and environmental challenges.

FFA2017 will renew its commitment to catalyse and pursue ideas that drive sustainability from the farm to the dinner table.

Join us and the high-level speakers at FFA2017



Kofi Annan

Founder and Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation, 7th Secretary-General of the United Nations (1997-2006), Nobel Peace Laureate



Janez Potočnik

Chair FFA2017,
Chairman RISE Foundation



Dame Ellen MacArthur

Founder, Ellen MacArthur Foundation



Giovanni La Via MEP

Former Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, European Parliament



Phil Hogan

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission



Daniel Calleja Crespo

Director-General,
Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

Register now at www.forumforagriculture.com

An initiative from

ELO  European Landowners' Organization

syngenta

Check www.forumforagriculture.com for further speakers, announcements, program details and updates

 @ForumForAg
 [forumforagriculture](https://www.facebook.com/forumforagriculture)

Media Partner **POLITICO**