



Copa and Cogeca

Present and future of plant protection in the EU from farmers' perspective

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"Further improving farming sustainability via Integrated Pest Management: Challenges & opportunities ahead"

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european farmers european agri-cooperatives

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Created in **1958**

23 million European farmers and family members

60 full members from the EU Member States and 36 partner organisations

Created in **1959**

22,000 European agricultural cooperatives

35 full members from the EU Member States, 4 affiliated members and 36 partner organisations



In **1962**, a joint Secretariat was created, making it one of the largest and most active organisations in Brussels for the past **60** years.

The role of the EU agricultural sector in the framework of the Green Deal objectives

- * Our agricultural and food industry make the EU one of the world's leading producers of food, guaranteeing food security and providing millions of jobs to Europeans.
- * EU farmers are also the number one custodians of the environment, as we take care of the natural resources on 48% of the EU's land.
- * Last December the Commission published their Communication on "The European Green Deal" where, among others, pesticides use in agriculture is tackled in the framework of the "Farm to Fork Strategy".
- * The Commission aims to "reduce the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50% and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030" and "a 20% reduction, at least, in the use of fertilisers".
- * The European Green Deal approach has several axis linked to the agricultural sector. This approach is an opportunity but is also a challenge and raises various concerns.



Current challenges

- * EU agricultural sector is currently facing a number of challenges:
 - * Ensuring food security under increasing demand for food, feed and non-food outlet production, and under climate change pressure.
 - * Feeding the world taking into account the complex interaction between agronomic, environmental and economic values.
 - * Producing food in the future with even fewer natural resources while:
 - * facing new pests and diseases derived from climate change effects
 - * reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - * maintaining the same amount of productivity on the same amount of land
 - * Shifting consumer demands with increased:
 - * requirements with respect to the product itself (quality, diversity)
 - * Requirements on how it is produced (respecting the “One Health” concept).



Farmers' views on crop protection: main principles

- * Safeguarding plants and crops' health is a cornerstone of all farming activities and modern arable farming in the EU.
- * Farmers may have recourse to Plant Protection Products (PPPs) to grow healthy crops on competitive terms and ensure that consumer demands are met.
- * At the same time, they are providing safe food, feed and non-food agricultural products and safeguarding the environment.
- * The presence in the market of a plant protection tool can make a huge economic difference for farmers.
- * The current context of global trade allows other countries to have tools currently unavailable in the EU. This creates an unlevelled playing field for the competitiveness of EU farmers.



Farmers' views on crop protection: IPM

- * IPM allows farmers to avoid an excessive use of chemical pesticides and they are increasingly moving towards low-risk substances and selective crop protection techniques.
- * Availability and use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tools is key for a sustainable agricultural production in the EU.
- * IPM combines various agricultural practices to reduce the impact of agriculture on the environment: crop rotation, implementation of resistant cultivars, soil management, seed protection, etc.
- * IPM considers the use of chemicals is the last resort in agriculture.
- * Chemical PPPs will remain an essential element in IPM, although their share will continue to decrease towards the future.
- * PPPs support high quality agricultural production.



Farmers' toolbox: need of alternatives

- * Farmers need adequate tools to better manage natural resources, to deliver goods and services to the consumers, to adapt to the effects of climate change on agriculture and to respond to societal demands.
- * The way to reduce the use of pesticides and fertilisers when there is no mention of a list of “credible and realistic alternatives” in the Green Deal Communication should be clarified already.
- * New alternatives to conventional PPPs would allow for an increase in quantity and quality of agricultural output while using fewer but more precise inputs.
- * Alternatives must be sourced as much as possible from the EU crop protection industry in order to treat our crops when necessary and be able to provide high-value and quality food and horticultural products with EU origin.
- * Clear, transparent and swift procedures for the evaluation of new active substances and plant protection techniques should always be guaranteed.
- * The interest of EU farmers to apply low-risk PPPs and other sustainable technologies is high but proper availability of such products is still far from envisaged.



Farmers' toolbox: innovation as a crucial piece

Early 1960s → **yield improvement** = most important source of growth in global crop production (**78%**)

In 1960 → 2,400g of active ingredient per hectare to protect crops from weeds → **Innovation** in agriculture → **reduction of 97%** of this average use.

EEA, 2018

- * Innovation is essential for the European agricultural sector to enhance sustainability in a globalized market.
- * The first issue to tackle is identifying farmers' specific needs in advance in order to bridge the gap between science and practice.
- * Research and development of alternatives for IPM is very important.
- * Innovation should be based on existing scientific literature + wealth of knowledge collected by EU-based and national research programmes.
- * R&I needs to take into account the differences in crop production and climatic regions around the EU.
- * Exchange of information must be encouraged between stakeholders within the agri-food chain and also with researchers.
- * Research results must be made available for farmers in a timely manner + translated into innovative and readily applicable tools in the fields.



Farmers' toolbox: a solid scientific basis for plant protection tools

- * The F2F and the Green Deal proposals should be based on a solid science-based risk analysis paradigm, apart from the precautionary principle.
- * Placing in the market of safe and effective active substances should always be science-based assessment. This **is key**.
- * Farmers should be equipped with the right toolbox which should be developed hand in hand with cutting-edge scientific progress.
- * EFSA should always play a key role in the authorization procedure by ensuring a consistent and robust evaluation of active substances.
- * The inclusion of New Breeding Techniques as “new technologies and scientific discoveries” in the framework of the Green Deal must be further explained by the EC.



Farmers' toolbox: Investments, costs and affordability

- * All the alternatives that may come to the agricultural market must be affordable for farmers.
- * Farmers and agri-cooperatives are already investing and applying innovative solutions to keep their businesses competitive and sustainable.
- * On the other hand, costs and time needed to register new substances have increased significantly in the last few years, while many substances have not even been re-authorised.
- * For a lot of farmers, it is still difficult to afford some of the new tools already available.
- * Such investments, for now, are not cost-effective for producers.
- * Investments should keep going for the availability of products which may be adapted to all the EU agricultural systems and circumstances.



Food for thought

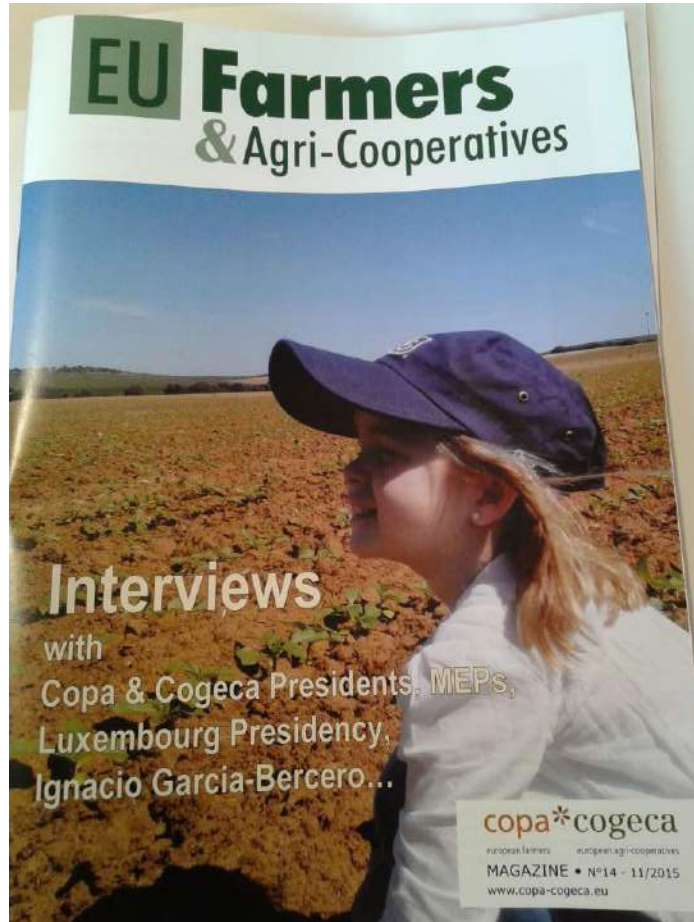
- * The F2F strategy must consider all three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) before taking any political or regulatory decision about EU agriculture.
- * A holistic impact assessment should be performed before establishing targets to reduce the use of conventional PPPs while not having enough alternatives at hand.
- * A safe, effective and affordable toolbox guarantees:
 - * Avoidance of a further reduction of yields and ensure food security.
 - * Maintenance of the production while tackling the increasing effects of climate change and other major crisis like COVID-19
- * It is fundamental that the policy formulation and implementation:
 - * Supports agricultural economic sustainability
 - * Improves the functioning of the markets
 - * Contributes to a more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable agrifood sector.
 - * Recognises that there are already numerous production methods which bring additional benefits on sustainability



Farming



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Thank you for your attention!



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