

Press Release

**Breakfast conference on Integrated Pest Management & Plant Protection  
Matching ambition, realism and innovation in the Farm-to-Fork strategy**

On 23 January 2020, under the patronage of MEP Anne Sander, the Agriculture & Progress Platform hosted a breakfast event in the European Parliament on Integrated Pest Management and Plant Protection. The debate showcased the efforts the maize and sugar beet sector have already made to implement IPM in practice, as well as the ambition and willingness to continue and further develop sustainable agricultural practices as allies of an ecological and technological transition. Speakers emphasised the need for science-based innovation and a clear and solid regulatory framework taking into account the agricultural reality and practice.

**MEP Anne Sander (EPP)** opened the conference, by emphasising the importance of European agriculture as one of the best performing and sustainable worldwide. She recalled the recent decision of the European Parliament regarding the European Green Deal, in which the EPP called for a fair and adequate budget for the Common Agricultural Policy: “The CAP must have the means to achieve its ambition. The budget must be equal to its environmental objectives.” She made a clear call for a science-based regulatory framework embracing innovation.

**Alex Krick (International Confederation of European Sugar Beet Growers - CIBE)** presented how Integrated Pest Management in the beet sugar sector – based on substantial investments in innovative techniques - has reduced use of plant protection products. He explained that unequivocal support of innovative techniques, such as NBTs, is a condition sine qua non. “The question is not whether to reduce further, but how and at what realistic pace. Reducing the crop protection toolbox too quickly, too dogmatically will leave farmers unarmed against naturally occurring threats”.

**Céline Duroc (French Association of Maize Producers -AGPM)** presented how via prevention, monitoring and intervention the maize sector tries to manage the combat against diseases, weeds and pests. Prevention is crucial and can avoid treatment. However, “We must protect our crops to prevent a degradation of yields and their sustainability”, stressed Mrs. Duroc. “When we lose solutions we can easily find ourselves in a technical dead end! The solutions we want to implement depend on the ability to have a toolbox that is as complete as possible.” She insisted that innovative solutions require an appropriate regulatory framework, notably for NBTs.

**Franck Laborde** (Secretary General of AGPM and a farmer himself in Pyrénées Atlantiques, France) as well as **Alexandre Quillet** (Chair of the Sugar Beet Technical Institute in France (ITB) and farmer in Normandie, France) demonstrated with very concrete examples the challenges they face in the field and how through innovative and flexible solutions they deal with them. Both however, also stressed the rapidly growing risk of facing technological deadlocks.

**In conclusion, the speakers agreed that their outspoken ambition needs to rhyme with realism and innovation to develop an appropriate and sufficient plant protection toolbox for maize and sugar beet growers.**



The Agriculture and Progress Platform will organise a **second Breakfast-gathering on 20 February 2020** focusing on **‘NBTs: innovation to achieve the Farm to Fork and Green Deal ambitions’** under the patronage of MEP **Paolo De Castro** at the premises of the European Parliament.

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