

**Agriculture & Progress** announces today its newest supporting partner CEETTAR (European Confederation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors) established in 1961 and representing about 150,000 companies and nearly 600,000 workers. It aims to represent the interests of land-based contractors in Europe.

We are very happy to be welcoming CEETTAR as an addition to our platform, particularly as we are trying to build bridges across the agricultural spectrum from European farmers, to operators, employees and consumers.

It is indeed increasingly important that the role and the impact of the platform be emphasised and grow stronger towards achieving our mission which is to join forces for sustainable agricultural production by means of educating, informing and presenting innovative ways to achieve this goal.

As a first contribution to this platform, CEETTAR is publishing its first article on a topic which is of great interest to its members and that advocates for innovative solutions in the agricultural economy.



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## **Launching the sharing economy in agriculture through the smart technology vouchers**

As Europe emerges from the current COVID19 crisis, we will need to get our economy back on track as quickly as possible. Now that the public support by the European Union and our governments is taking shape, the agricultural world itself need to prove that is should not be afraid to demonstrate originality by appropriating for itself the codes of the sharing economy.

What is sharing economy in agriculture? These are systems which facilitate the sharing underused assets or services. It is conveyed directly between a farmer and a contractor. It is all about co-creation and co-operation. This is made possible thanks to the advancements in artificial intelligence and digitisation. It also matches the ambition of the agricultural sector to mitigate the future risks and costs of inaction from climate change and biodiversity losses.

CEETTAR stands for the European Organisation of agricultural, rural and forestry contractors, the so-called "land-based" contractors. Land-based contractors are an essential part of the agriculture value chain and decision makers often ignore them. They are not directly CAP beneficiaries. However, through CAP support, farmers are already calling for manifold services provided by contractors.

CEETTAR supports the CAP reform, and wants to promote the use of innovative technologies and machinery by the agricultural sector.

How shall we proceed then? Land-based contractors want to upgrade the farmers' customers' experience, by providing them with tailor-made and technologically advanced services, on a sharing economy basis. The suppliers – the contractors - monetize their assets and professional expertise to provide services. In exchange, farmers of all size of exploitations receive an increase total amount and variety of available assets and services they demand, better and more information on their supply thanks to data sharing, and significantly reduced prices. Farmers and forestry-owners do not have to invest directly into machinery, they can rely upon contractors' expertise and equipment, whatever the size of their exploitation is.

For this reason, CEETTAR, together with the agriculture machinery association CEMA, propose the creation in the new CAP of smart technology vouchers. **Farmers would benefit from additional EU support through vouchers, which would be released when they are asking for the services of contractors.** The amount of the annual voucher would be calculated on a given percentage of the total cost of the service representing the precision agriculture part of it. <sup>1</sup>

The challenges for contractors are still enormous. As many other sectors, contractors – especially in the forestry sector – are tremendously suffering from a lack of skilled workforce. As entrepreneurs, contractors foster growth and innovation by providing employees with a clear and inspiring vision, as well as ambitious challenges that drive them to develop their skills. Our CEETTAR members in many countries engaged many efforts in campaigning to make the business more attractive to the young generation.

Briefly, it is about creating new business opportunity and finally new business models for the entire agriculture value chain, through for example a more accurate use of spraying technique. It is also about exchanging data according to contractually established provisions, and contributing to climate change mitigation, at a time where the European Commission proposes new carbon farming initiative in its Farm to Fork Strategy (to pay farmers for carbon sequestration under the CAP). In addition, let me insist on this: smart technology vouchers allow small farm-holdings to compete with bigger farms equipped with the most-advanced equipment, which will also have an indirect positive effect on rural development.

Finally yet importantly, investing in new technologies is not a cost; it is an investment. What we need is a better access to investment in the agriculture and forestry sector, and this is precisely the role of smart technology vouchers!

Jérôme Roche, Secretary General CEETTAR

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<sup>1</sup> All position papers can be found on the CEETTAR website: [www.ceettar.eu](http://www.ceettar.eu)