



**5th Forum for the Future of Agriculture - Regional Event  
Madrid, October 2, 2012**

**Meeting the food and environmental challenge**

The regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) in Madrid asked for a clear engagement in favour of the research and development (R&D) in agriculture; as well as for a better communication of the efforts provided by the farmers to society.

The Spanish Minister of Agriculture Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE, opened the FFA at CSIC in Madrid, with over 300 professionals from the sector. ARIAS CAÑETE declared that to face the challenge of maintaining high quality food production, while at the same time preserving natural resources, it is fundamental to be more efficient. The Minister criticized European misgivings about GMOs, causing farmers to lose competitiveness on the global market. Franz FISCHLER stated that it is possible to produce more food with a small increase in arable land. According to him, the problem is not production itself, but its distribution at a global level.

During the first session, Corrado PIRZIO-BIROLI, ELO President, spoke about public goods in agriculture such as nutrient recycling or habitat banking. Farmers want and are able to improve, but they need better knowledge and technology transfer systems. Carlos SÁNCHEZ, President of the Spanish IUCN Committee, presented various natural methods to obtain worldwide sustainable production; for example, important investments in green infrastructures. Lastly, Barun MITRA, Liberty Institute from New Delhi (India) drew the public attention on the issue of rational water use.

The second panel was opened by José Manuel SILVA, Director General, DG Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission. He stated that it is crucial to invest in R&D and to transfer knowledge to farmers. Pilar AYUSO, member of European Parliament Committee for Environment and substitute in the Committee for Agriculture, highlighted communication and subsidies as crucial policies to protect European agriculture. Isabel GARCIA TEJERINA, Secretary General, Ministry of Agriculture, Food reminded farmers are also concerned with the current use of natural resources, and durability of their activities; in fact, European agriculture is already the most protective of nature.

Carlos GARCIA, Professor, CEBAS-CSIC, spoke about innovation, underlining that in Spain the level of research is very good. Nevertheless, maintaining and improving this situation in the future will require financial support. Sergio DEDOMINICI, Syngenta Director for Iberian Peninsula, spoke about the relation between technology and durability. According to him, when we speak about durability we speak about science, because without multidisciplinary efforts we cannot achieve sustainable agriculture.

Luis Fernando VILLANUEVA, APROCA President, underlined the role of the landowner in managing the environment. Game management has to be perceived as a sustainable activity, stabilizing population in the rural zones. Francisco BELMONTE, President of Junta Central de Regantes de la Mancha Oriental, described the management of the irrigation system in his region, including the way to make it more efficient and sustainable. Pedro BARATO, ASAJA President, reminded that this sector is fulfilling the Kyoto objectives, and it would be very positive to grant a bigger support to farmers.

Isabel GARCÍA TEJERINA summarized the debate, reminding that the CAP has to maintain its social dimension. It is also crucial to optimize the use of natural resources. Finally, Franz FISCHLER thanked all the speakers and participants.